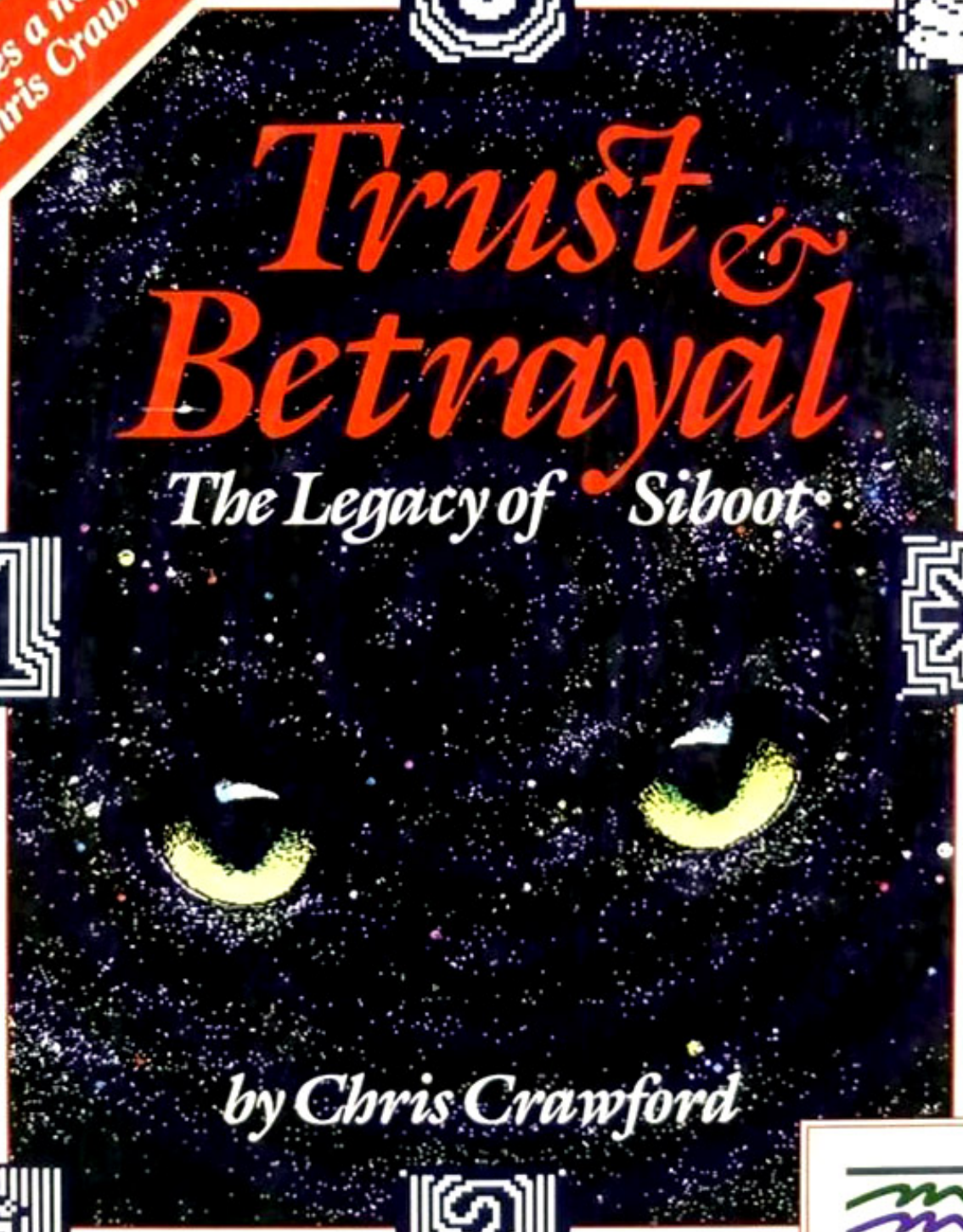
Includes a novella by Chris Crawford

Trust & Betrayal

The Legacy of Siboot



by Chris Crawford

MINDSCAPE

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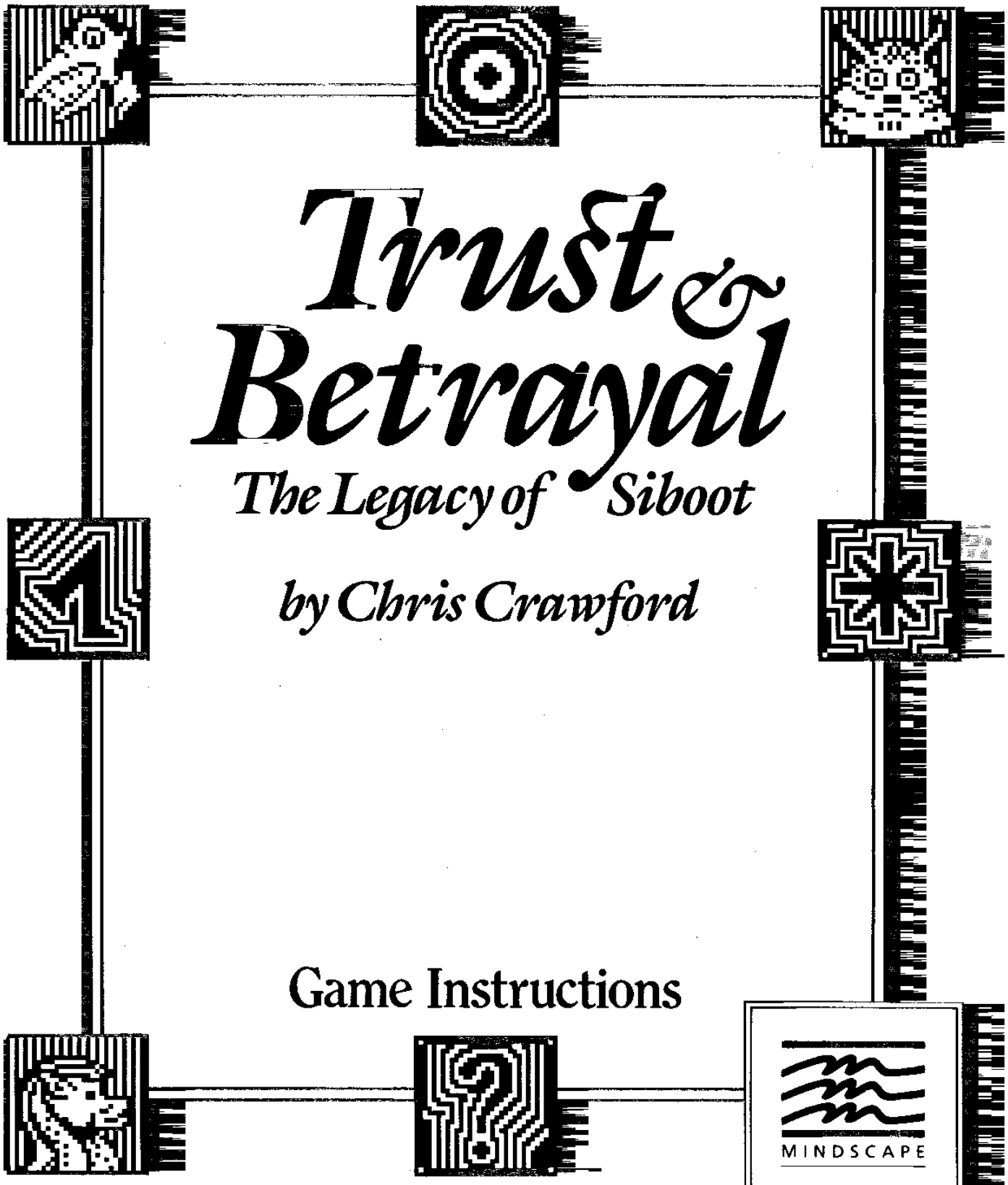


Trust & Betrayal

The Legacy of Siboot

by Chris Crawford

Game Instructions

MINDSCAPE

Game Instructions

Situation

You are Vetvel, one of seven acolytes on Kira, a moon of the planet Lamina. Lamina is populated by seven intelligent species who have spent most of their histories in strife. The tiny colony on Kira was founded as a political experiment to demonstrate the ability of suitably-inclined Laminans of different species to live in harmony, The experiment came too late; Lamina fought a limited nuclear war, shattering its civilization and leaving the colonists on Kira stranded. Under the leadership of a remarkable person named Siboot, the Kirans founded a new civilization based on the development of telepathic powers and a universal telepathic language called eeyal. From their position on Kira, they beamed radio messages to the home planet, proselytizing their philosophy/religion. Under this influence, Lamina successfully re-civilized itself, coming to accept Kira as the spiritual center of its civilization and the leader of Kira, called the Shepherd, as its spiritual leader.

One hundred and thirty-five years have passed since the nuclear war; there have been four Shepherds. Now Feslym, the fourth Shepherd, has died, and the time has come to replace him. The Shepherdship will be awarded to the first acolyte who garners eight auras of each of the three types: tanaga, katsin, and shial. Auras are a mental property associated with telepathy, and they confer upon their owner greater telepathic powers. Each acolyte has, by dint of much training, built up a goodly set of auras. But now the acolytes will engage in mental combat to acquire the remaining auras each needs to attain the perfect 8-8-8 set and become Shepherd.

Mental combat

Mental combat is fought at night, while you sleep. Your spirit travels into the Land of the Auras, there encountering the spirits of other acolytes. During an encounter, you wrap yourself in one of your auras, as does your opponent. A tanaga aura will defeat a katsin aura, a katsin aura will defeat a shial aura, and a shial aura will defeat a tanaga aura. Two auras of the same type stand off without a victor. The victor in mental combat gets to keep the aura of the loser.

Players will normally try to play those auras that will win them the auras of which they have the greatest shortage. The trick to mental combat, then, is to learn how many auras your potential opponents have; if you have this information, you can readily anticipate what aura they will use in combat and counter it with the proper aura. Discovering what auras people have is the outermost challenge of the game.

Deals

You spend most of your time during the day scurrying about trying to gather the information you need. Each morning, you awaken with a single item of information about each of the other acolytes. An item of information is called an "aura-count"; it is the number of auras of a single type (tanaga, katsin, or shial) that an acolyte possesses. Each morning, you know one aura-count for each acolyte. You need to know all three to reliably predict their behavior.

Other acolytes know the other aura-counts. You can make deals with them, revealing your information about a person in return for their revealing their information. Getting them to accept your deals is a large part of the challenge of the game. Revealing somebody's aura-count to another person is considered to be an act of betrayal; should the victim of the betrayal discover the act, he will be angry with his betrayer. Thus, you must be careful not to betray your friends. More important, you must carefully choose the people with whom you make deals. An untrustworthy person might just run to your victim and tell the victim what you have done, damaging your relationship with that person and enhancing his own. There is also the simple issue of friendship-sometimes you will make a deal with a friend whom you do not fully trust, but whose goodwill you want to retain.

Betraying deals

Another form of betrayal is telling people about the betrayal that a third person has committed. This occurs when Person A tells Person B that a Person C betrayed Person D. This form of betrayal is considered to be just as bad as the deal-betrayal.

Dialogues

The central problems you have, then, involve yourrelationships with the other characters, Whom can you trust? How do you get them to trust you? If you betray somebody often, word is bound to get back to him and he will lose his trust in you. But there are other ways to develop your relationships with people: yourconversations with them. Whenever you encounteranother character, you can carry on a dialogue with that person. Some of that dialogue is very businesslike in style: making deals, asking questions, and so on. But there is also an emotional component to the dialogues that can be very important. You can express your feelings towards the person. These things can influence the tone of the dialogue and make your friend more inclined to trust, like, or fear you.

Promises

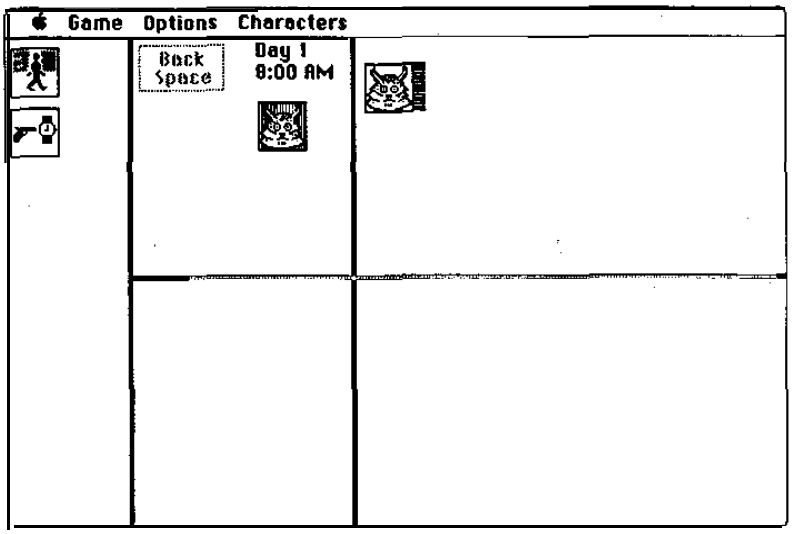
You can try to win a character's trust or friendship by making promises. There are two types of promises: "promise no attack" and "promise no betray" If you make the first promise to a person, you are guaranteeing that you will not attack that person during the upcoming night Note that the promise expires at dawn; you could still attack the person on any following night. This is still of value to both of you; it earns some friendship and it also encourages

the other person not to bother garnering information about you (the need for it is lessened). If you renege on a promise, the person will be angry with you and will trust you less.

The other form of promise is more complicated. If you promise somebody that you won't betray him, you are guaranteeing that you have not and will not betray him during the day on which you made the promise. The good news, then, is that the promise expires at dawn the next day; you can betray him afterwards without violating your promise. The bad news is that the promise is retroactive: you must not have betrayed the person at any time during the same day that you make the promise, regardless of whether it was sooner or later. Such a promise will increase a person's trust in you, but if you violate the promise, he will lose more trust in you.

Eeyal

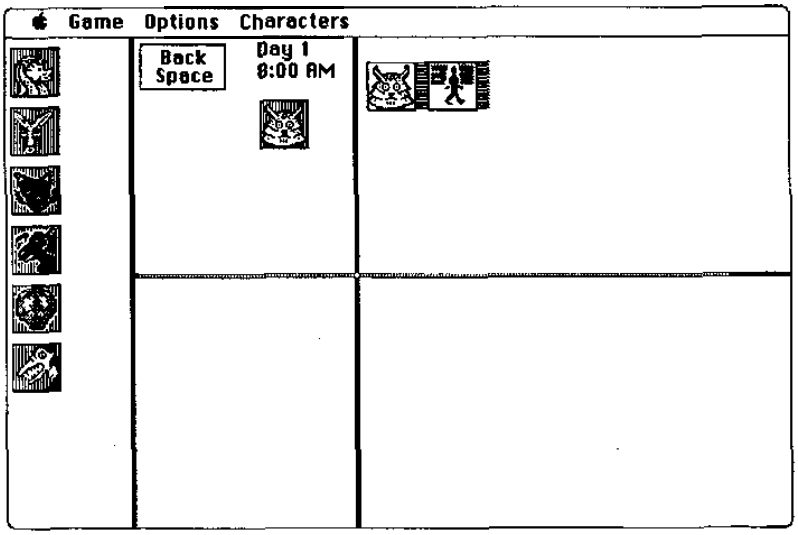
The dialogues, and indeed the entire play of the game, is carried out in eeyal, the telepathic language of Kira. A single word of eeyal is represented by an icon: if you want to know what any icon means, just click down on that icon and a quick-and-dirty translation will appear. The screen is divided into five parts:



The box on the far left contains the icon-words that are available for you to say. Think of it as a graphical menu. The top middle box contains various control boxes that let you edit the sentences you build. It also contains status information such as the date and time, where you are, and whom you are with. The lower middle box shows your relationship with that person. The top right box shows the sentence you have entered so far, and the bottom right box shows the sentence that somebody is saying back to you.

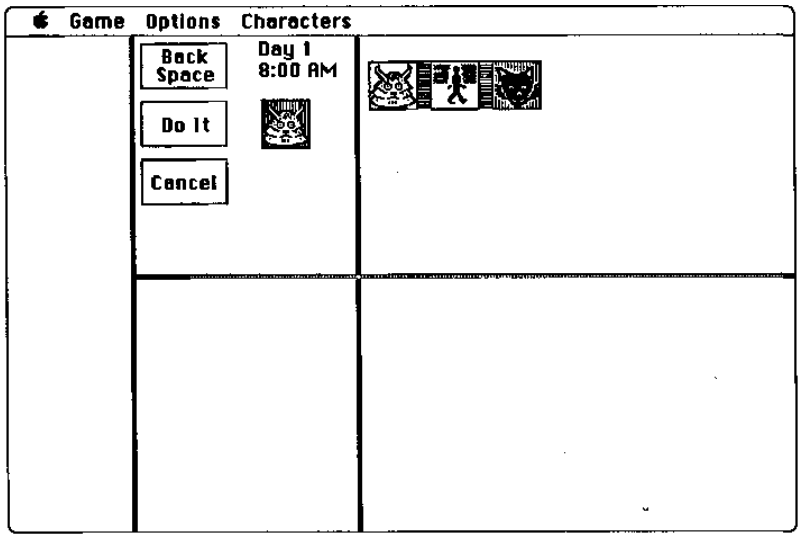
You choose an icon-word from the box on the left by moving the pointer to it, clicking, and releasing. If you just want to know what one of these icons means, click and hold over the

icon; it will translate. If you don't want to choose that icon, move the pointer away from the icon before releasing the button. When you have selected a word, it will be added to the sentence that you are building in the upper right box. The computer always fills in the first word of the sentence for you (Vetvel), because it is the subject of the sentence and YOU are Vetvel. Now suppose, for example, that YOU have selected the first icon in the left box, which means "go to." Then the screen would look like this:



Note how the verb "go to" has been placed after the subject. Note also that there is now a new set of icons in the box on the left These icons are the possible places to which you could go. To declare where you are going, you select one of these icons. Finally, note that the little box labelled "Back Space" is now activated. This means that you can backspace an icon, just like the Backspace key on a keyboard, only it will cause you to backspace an entire icon. Suppose that you select the third icon.

Then you'll get a screen looking like this:



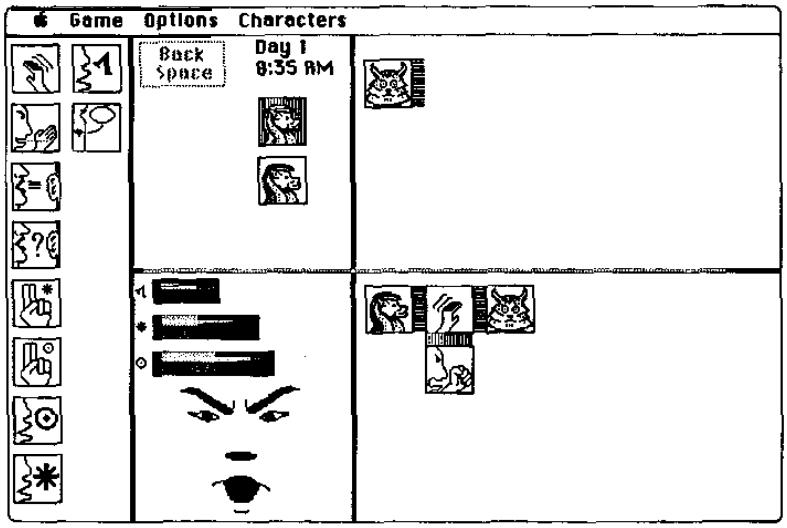
This box on the right shows the completed sentence: "Vetvel go to Wiki house." It also adds two new commands into the little box in the upper center. One of these, "Do It," will cause that sentence to execute. The other, "Cancel:' is a big version of Backspace: it erases the entire sentence and allows you to start all over.

Eeyal is a language unlike any you have ever used. While it is in many ways very primitive, it has a special characteristic unknown in regular languages: since you speak directly from your mind, you cannot lie or otherwise misspeak yourself in eeyal. It won't let you. The only words you can ever speak are words that make sense, and are true and proper. For example, you cannot offer somebody a deal in which you would be giving him information he already knows: he wouldn't gain anything from such a deal, so there's no point in even offering it In effect, eeyal takes care of the rules of the game for you. If you can say it, it's fair to say; if you can't say it, there's a good reason why you can't.

To help explain eeyal, there is a little narration box that pops up every time you do something: it explains what is happening in plain English. After a while, you will tire of this narration; you can turn it off from the OPTIONS menu.

Dialogue Information

When you enter into a dialogue with a person, the screen changes to show more information about that person:



The bar graphs are meant to indicate your relationship with that person (how he or she feels about you) in terms of his fear, trust, and love for you. The face indicates the general emotional tone of the last comment made by your partner. If you have uncertainties about any of these terms, just click on the graphic in question and it will explain itself.

Game Menu

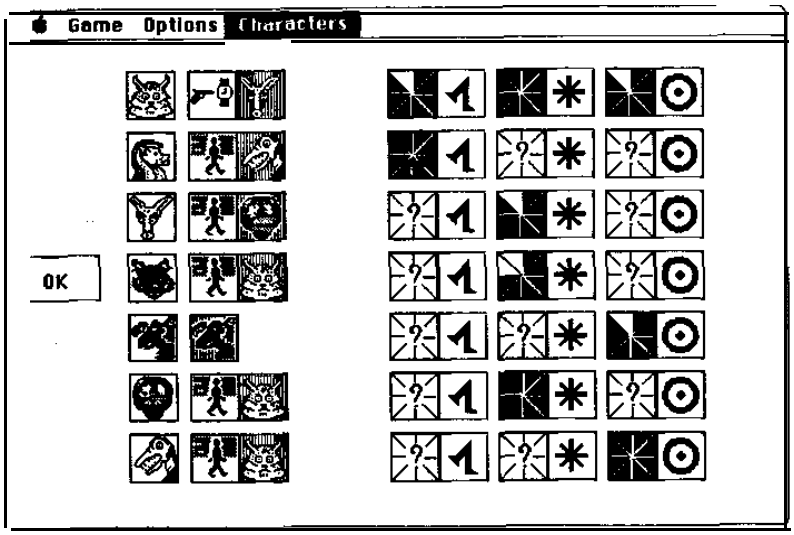
This menu has three items: Quit Game, Load Game, and Save Game. Quit Game will terminate play without saving it: you are given an alert box to warn you and give you one chance to abort this precipitous decision. Load Game is almost as dangerous: it will load an old game over the current one, destroying the current game-in-progress. Save Game will save the current game, allowing you to quit and later return to the game.

Options Menu

The Options menu allows you to set several minor parameters. The first is the playing of the sound during combat; you can turn it on or off. The second is the appearance of narration; you can turn it on or off. The third option uses three menu items to set the speed of some of the displays. The Long Delay option sets a long delay for some displays; the Short Delay option has a shorter display delay; and the No Delay insures that there are no unnecessary delays.

Character Menu

The first item on the Character menu displays your current knowledge of the other characters in the game; you will consult this frequently before entering combat. When you select this item, you will see a screen that looks like this:



This screen tells you that Vetvel is waiting outside Gardbore's house, has seven tanagas, eight katsins, and seven shials. Most of the other characters are going to other places, but Locksher is home. The question marks indicate an unknown quantity of aura.

The other items on this menu present information on each of the characters. They show the picture of the character and give a personality sketch of the character. It also gives a quick rundown on how the characters feel about each other; this information changes during the course of the game, but this display's information is always current

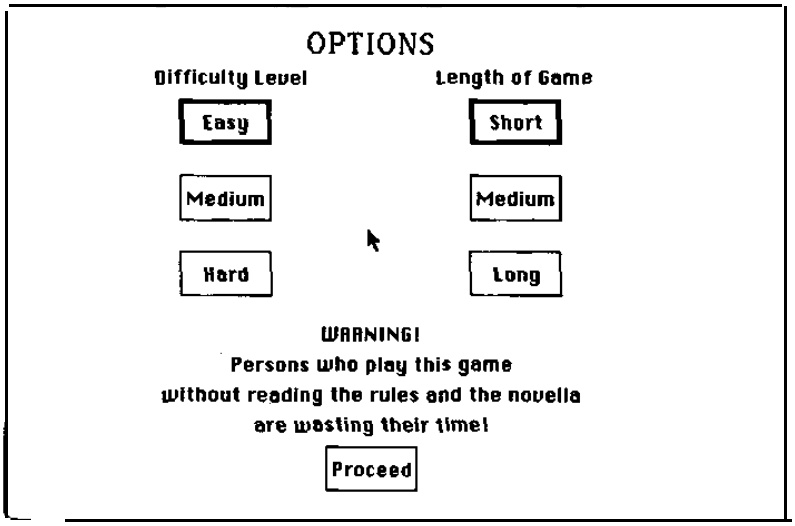
RECALL TODAY Menu

This menu has but a single item that will give you a quick summary of promises and betrayals made today. Consult it to find out what promises you have made so that you don't forget and break a promise. It will also remind you about any betrayals you have made, or have been made against you.

OPTIONS screen

The OPTIONS display appears at the beginning of the game and allows you to declare what kind of game you will play. There are two choices for you to make: how difficult the game will be and how long to play.

The OPTIONS screen looks like this:



If you choose the Easy difficulty level, then everybody will think that you're wonderful, and the game will go swimmingly. The characters will behave in a more exaggerated fashion; they will react to good things with great joy and bad things with fury. Their behavior in combat is simple and easy to predict if you know their aura-counts.

In the Medium difficulty level, things are much like the Beginner level, only not so exaggerated. The characters will still like you and trust you and fear you, but not so much as in the Beginner level. They will plan their combat moves in the same manner. Their reactions to your behavior will be less exaggerated than in the Beginner level.

In the Hard difficulty level, they will treat you like normal-there is no emotional boost in your favor. Their reactions to your behavior will be more subtle than in the other levels. The biggest change is in their behavior in combat. The other characters will take into consideration what they know about your auracounts in choosing an aura for combat Thus, in the Easy and Medium difficulty levels, you need only consider the aura-counts of your opponents, knowing with confidence what they will do in most cases, but in the Hard difficulty level you must guess their behavior based on what they might know about you.

The Length of Game choice determines how many auras you start the game with. For a short game, you and the other characters will all start just a few auras shy of the 8-8-8 combination needed to win. It won't take much time for somebody to win. In the long game, you start with very few auras and will need to go for a long time to win.

Random Events

These are strange occurrences that pop up during the course of the game. The computer will tell you a story and present you with four options in the lower portion of the screen. Select the appropriate option by clicking on it with the pointer and click on the box marked

"Done" when you are satisfied with your decision. If the story is long, it may occupy several screens; in this case, you can use the "Next Page" and "Previous Page" boxes to step through the story Many of your decisions during random events will affect your relationship, with other characters. A decision made during a random event can influence the way another character feels about you.

A Typical Day

You will normally start the day by visiting one of your friends. Skordokott and Wiki are good candidates, or perhaps Kendra. Let's say that you visit Skordokott After a few pleasantries, you can plunge right into dealmaking because Skordokott is a friend of yours. It's best to offer him a deal betraying somebody he doesn't like: Zubi is often a good choice here. If at first he doesn't respond to your offer, perhaps an appeal to his friendship (by begging) will help. Once you've broken the ice with your first deal, you'll find him more amenable to dealmaking. It might also help to promise him that you won't attack or betray him. After all, Skordokott is your best friend, and you would never attack or betray him anyway, so why not make this promise? It can only cement the bond between you. You can trust Skordokott to keep your deals secret, so make almost any deal you can with him.

After a while, you will have made all the deals possible with Skordokott, so you say goodbye and head for another house. Perhaps Wiki would be a good choice, or maybe Kendra. These people are moderately friendly, but you will have to be more careful with them. You must break the ice carefully, perhaps trading information on other betrayals, but don't betray Skordokott!

After you have talked with all three of these people, you will probably have a good set of information about other people's auras. You might have enough to call it a day and just head home. Perhaps you need more. If so, head for one of the three characters you have not yet spoken with. None of them are very sympathetic to you, but if you are careful, persuasive, intimidating, or otherwise right on the mark, you MIGHT be able to swing a deal or two. It may take some extended discussion to warm them up, though.

Eventually you head home. Now you just wait for nightfall with the WAIT word. Perhaps somebody will come to visit you. Remember that it's not nice for a host to kick out a guest Humor your guest and try to make the dialogue as productive as possible. Eventually he or she will leave.

Now, night is falling, and it is time to plan your all-important attack Consult the All Characters displayand see who has what Decide what YOU are most in need of and then find somebody who has an excess of that aura, and will likely use it in combat. It may be that the best person to attack is a friend of yours. If so, you must then make a difficult decision: do you attack a friend, or accept a less-desirable attack on somebody else?

You must also be prepared for somebody to attack you. This will happen after your own attack If somebody does come to attack you, you will be shown what their aura-counts are, and you will have to guess the best defense against them.

How to Win

The first skill you must learn is predicting another person's behavior in combat. This is not too difficult In general, you always want to try to win an aura that you have the greatest shortage of, and you want to fight with (and therefore risk losing) an aura that you have a large quantity of. Other people will do the same. For example, here is an extremely simple situation: suppose that you have 6 tanagas, 8 katsins, and 1 shial, while Kendra has 1 tanaga, 6 katsins, and 8 shials. You want to win a shial, so you will want to play one of your katsins, which is perfect, because you are highest in katsin anyway. Kendra is lowest in tanaga, so she will want to win a tanaga, so she will want to play one of her shials. Thus, her best move plays right into the hands of your best move. That's the kind of situation that's easy to figure out. The worst situation arises when Kendra has, say, seven of each aura; then you have no way of knowing what she'll do.

Here's a tougher example: You have 6 tanagas, 7 katsins, and 8 shials. Kendra has 6 tanagas, 7 katsins, and 6 shials. What do you play against Kendra? You'd like to play your shial in the hope of winning a tanaga. But in this case that would be unwise. Kendra will play her katsin to win a shial, because she is strongest in katsin. If you play your shial against her katsin, you will lose. Your best bet is to play your tanaga, even though that is what you are weakest in. Why? Because you h-now that Kendra will use her katsin. Even if it were an expert level game, Kendra would play her katsin because she would think that you would do the obvious thing and use your shial.

It is important to remember that there are two levels of indirection here: first, you must figure what your opponent will attack with, then you must figure what you need to use to beat that. Thus, you must step back two steps from the aura that your opponent is weakest in. For example, if your opponent is weakest in katsin, then he will probably use tanaga, and so you must use shial.

Remember that the "Hard" difficulty level game allows the other characters to anticipate your combat decisions based on what they know about your aura-counts. If you are smart enough to plan your move based on what you know about other characters, they too can be smart enough to do the same. The problem is, you don't know how much they know. The best way to deal with this is to try to prevent them from finding out your aura-counts. If you are well-liked and feared, you are safer.

The game is won or lost in dialogues. You must comport yourself carefully in these, using tact, bluster, friendliness, or whatever is appropriate to the situation.

The only solid advantage you can get in the game comes from learning as much as possible about the other characters. This, in turn, hinges on your ability to cope with them as people. This is where the game becomes an un-strategy game. The characters in this game have distinct personalities. You can't outthink them. You can appeal to their sympathies, try to intimidate them, or treat them with great respect or disdain. Different characters respond differently. You must rely not only on your analytic skills, but also on your intuition and your social skills.

A Dictionary of Eeyal

Vetvel — A Jomkar. That's you!

Kendra — A Klast female.

Gardbore — A Frem male.

Wiki — A Ripi male.

Locksher — A Lokweel male.

Zubi — A Srol female.

Skordokott — A Tayran male.

nobody

Used in answering the question, “Has anybody betrayed me?” Use of this word does not mean that betrayal has not happened, only that the speaker is unaware of any betrayals of the type requested.

who

Used in asking the question, “Has anybody betrayed me?” [The actual form is, “I ask you that who has betrayed me.“]

greet

Required to initiate a conversation with a person. The speaker must also specify the tone of the greeting.

say goodbye

Required to terminate a conversation with a person.

warmly

A tone that modifies a greeting.

nice

A tone that modifies a greeting.

sincere

A tone that modifies a greeting.

cool

A tone that modifies a greeting.

threatening — A tone that modifies a greeting.

haughty — A tone that modifies a greeting.

formal — A tone that modifies a greeting.

accuse — Used to confront a person who has broken a promise or betrayed you, either by making a deal about you or by tattling on you. A friend will respond to an accusation with an apology.

tanaga count — The amount of tanaga that a person has. This word is used as part of a deal.

katsin count — The amount of katsin that a person has. This word is used as part of a deal.

shial count — The amount of shial that a person has. This word is used as part of a deal.

offer-reveal — The most important verb of the game; you offer to reveal somebody's aura-count in return for the other person agreeing to reveal another aura-count.

beg

A followup to a deal-offer that was rejected. The same deal is offered, but you are imploring the person to accept the deal. You are appealling to a person's friendship with this verb.

threaten

Another followup to a deal-offer that was rejected. Again, the same deal is offered, but this time you are attempting to intimidate the person into accepting the deal. There is no specific bad action threatened by this verb, just a general nastiness.

betray

A verb describing either of two acts: revealing something about a person's aura-counts in a deal, or telling a third person that the individual in question committed an act of betrayal.

go to

Go to the house of the person specified as direct object. This doesn't get you into the house; if nobody is home, or there is already another guest there, you will end up waiting outside the door, and can then either wait longer or give up and go elsewhere.

tanaga-attack

Use a tanaga-aura in attacking another acolyte.

katsin-attack

Use a katsin-aura in attacking another acolyte.

shial-attack Use a shial-aura in attacking another acolyte.

Vetvel house Vetvel's house.

Kendra house Kendra's house.

Gardbore house Gardbore's house.

Wiki house Wiki's house.

Locksher house Locksher's house.

Zubi house Zubi's house.

Skordokott house Skordokott's house.

tanaga tanaga.

katsin katsin.

shial shial.

tell Used to tell another person about a betrayal.

accept Accept a deal-offer; the deal is automatically consummated.

reject Reject a deal-offer.

if An intrinsic part of deal-sentences, linking the first party's side of the deal with the second party's side of the deal.

ask Used to ask somebody if you have been betrayed. You cannot ask if anybody else has been betrayed, but you or your interlocutor can volunteer such information.

answer Answer a question. Only true answers are allowed. It is possible to answer a question in such a way as to admit guilt.

that Links an ask- or tell- clause with its object-clause.

won't betray Promise somebody that you will not betray them today.

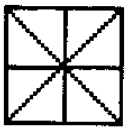
won't attack Promise somebody that you will not attack them tonight.

wait Wait for one hour. If anything happens to you during that time, you will stop waiting and start interacting. Thus, if you wait outside a person's door, you will stop waiting as soon as they come home or their current guest leaves.

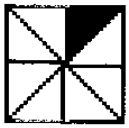
broke trust bond An accusation that you broke a "won't betray" promise.

broke attack bond An accusation that you broke a "won't attack" promise.

how many? An unspecified quantity. You don't know how many things.



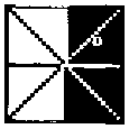
zero The number zero.



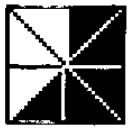
one The number one.

two The number two.

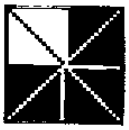
three The number three.



four The number four.



five The number five.



six The number six.

seven The number seven.

eight The number eight.

say feeling Express an emotion; the remaining words in this dictionary are all objects of this verb, that is, emotional expressions that the person can use.

	small talk	Minor niceties that convey no direct emotion.
	flatter	Butter them up.
	trust	Declares that you trust the person you're talking to.
	fear	Declares that you fear the person you're talking to.
	love	Declares that you love the person you're talking to.
	don't fear	Declares that you don't fear the person you're talking to.
	don't trust	Declares that you don't trust the person you're talking to.
	don't love	Declares that you don't love the person you're talking to.
	forgive	This is a response to a nasty action from another person.

yell at — Expresses great anger.

thanks — A nice thing to say after a favor.

sorry — A response to an accusation. Makes you somewhat beholden to the person to whom you apologize.

deride — Make fun of somebody.

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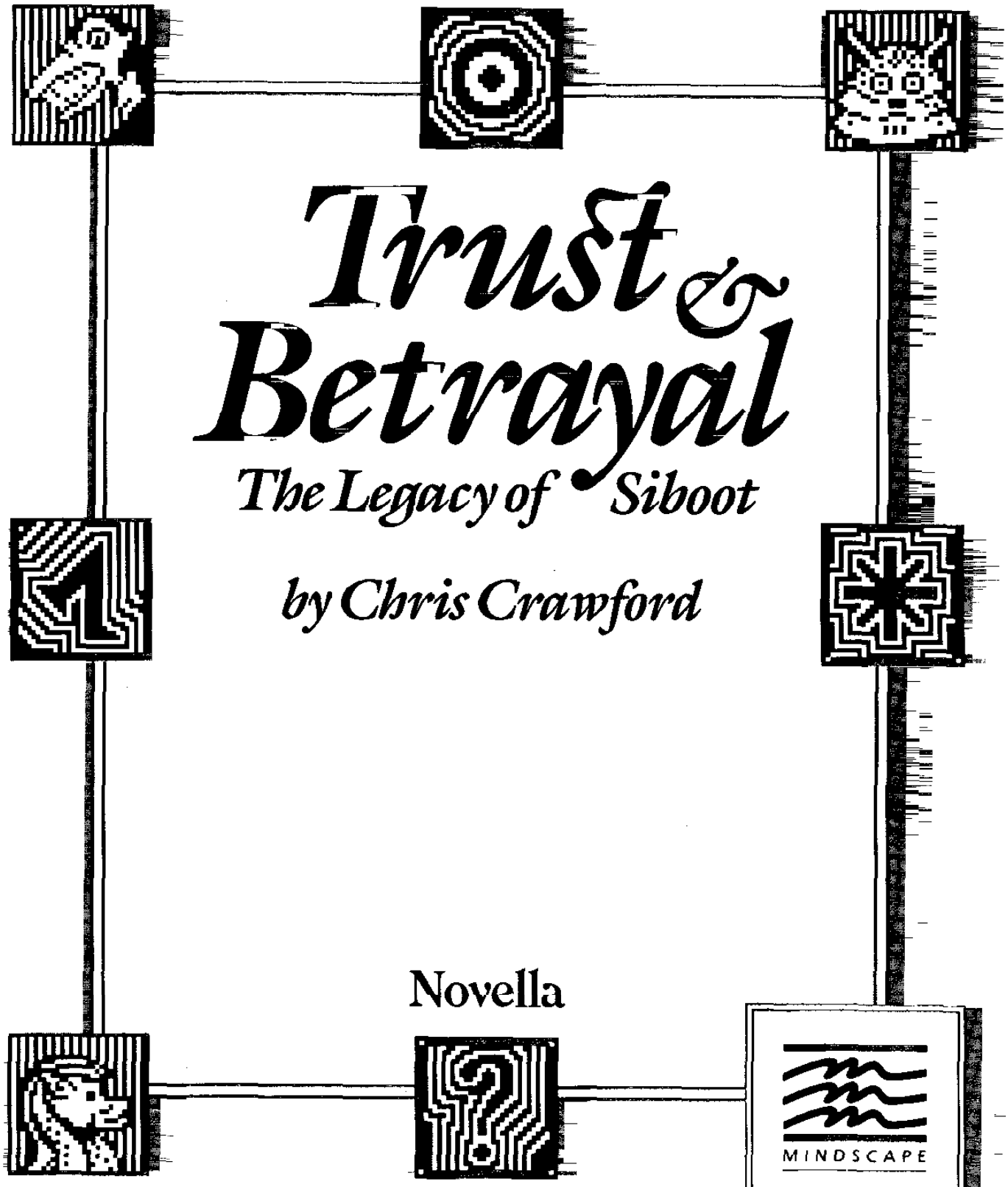

Trust & Betrayal

The Legacy of Siboot

by Chris Crawford

Novella

MINDSCAPE

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Siboot

He had waited patiently for his turn to look out the window. When finally it came, the view alone justified all the testing and hassle of the last ten months. There in space hung Kira, the moon of Lamina. For all the talk about it holding the future of the Seven Species, it was an ominously barren place. From here in space, most of Kira looked to be bare rock and sand. The atmosphere was thinner than Lamina's, showing just a tiny sliver of brightness at the limb. For all its beauty, it gave Siboot a strong sense of foreboding. How could we possibly hope to carve a colony out of this barren rock?

The first explorations had shown that the atmosphere was barely adequate to support life, but at the equator the temperatures were certainly comfortable. Careful management of the subsurface water would permit some agriculture, mostly desert-grazing animals, a little grain, and a few vegetable gardens. This was not the lush gardenland some people back home spoke of with more hope than knowledge. Regular shipments of bulk protein and vitamins from Lamina would be necessary for a few years more.

This was a strange colony, to be sure. Everyone talked about it as if someday it would teem with millions of Laminans, like the mother planet, but Siboot felt in his heart that this day would never come. We can do great feats with our technology, he thought, but it will be many a century before we can rework the surfaces of planets, or even moons. Kira is a dead and forbidding place, and will likely remain so despite our ambitious plans for colonization. Look how limited we are: tens of thousands clamor for a place on Kira, yet the population is strictly limited. The Space Office's people know perfectly well that Kira cannot support more than a few hundred people, and all that noise about processing applications is just a subterfuge to cover their policy of limiting the population. A strange colony, indeed.

But then a new thought struck him. Kira is a new kind of colony. We are not colonizing the land, for there is no arable land to speak of, only rock and sand. We are colonizing a new frontier: our own spirits. The harsh environment of Kira forces us all, Srols, Tayrans, Jomkars, Ripis, Klasts, Frems, and Lokweels alike, to crowd together into tight quarters, work directly together, and somehow get along as we have never been able to do before. No wonder the Space Office is so careful about picking idealistic young fools like me; we are meant to be the tangible proof of the ability of all Laminans to live together without the strife that tears apart our home world.

His time was up; he had to yield the window to the Frem behind him. He cast a last glance at the moon before him and stepped back Colonizing our spirits; he liked that thought

Armageddonette

It started with a minor confrontation between the Jomkars and the Ripi. The former had been assisting radical elements attempting to overthrow the Ripi government, and the Ripis discovered the plot and demanded immediate cessation of all such efforts and an apology. The Jomkan refused the Ripi demand.

The issue was complicated by the mutual support treaty that existed between the Ripis and the Klasts. These treaties required the signatories to come to the aid of each other should any action be taken against their respective governments. The treaties had been intended to cover only acts of war, but the Ripis argued persuasively that an attempt to overthrow a government was just as militant as an act of war and should be treated as comparable with one. The Klasts, wary of Jomkar perfidy, were all too ready to pledge their support They threatened the Jomkars with full retaliation should they act against the Ripis.

The Jomkars were taken by surprise by the Klast entry into the dispute and alarmed by the Ripi/Klast argument that the Jomkar actions had been acts of war. The Jomkar government did not perceive its actions to be warlike and protested as much to the Klasts. At the same time, the Jomkan appealed to their allies, the Tayrans, for support, and the Tayrans responded reluctantly, but positively.

A minor dispute between the Ripis and the Jomkars had escalated into a major international incident At this point the Srols attempted to intervene diplomatically. The Srols had close ties to the Tayrans and had no desire to allow those ties to drag them into a major war. They saw their ties to the Tayrans as a source of leverage that would make it easier for them to bring the crisis to a peaceful conclusion. And so the Srols dispatched emissaries to each of the involved capitals with their offer to use their good offices to resolve the dispute amicably and fairly

The crisis had frightened all concerned, for the world had never before come so close to a nuclear war. The Srol diplomatic missions were received with honest relief in all quarters. Their proposal to the Ripis and Klasts struck those nations as entirely fair and proper, and the proposal gained credibility from the influence the Srols were known to wield in the Tayran capital. Moreover, the Tayrans seemed amenable to the Srol initiative, and they would surely bring the Jomkars around. After two terrifying weeks of ever-larger headlines, the world seemed to be gravitating back towards peace.

And then the peace process was shattered by a totally unexpected revelation. Along with their public proposal, the Srols had sent to the Tayrans private assurances that the Srols would at a later date support the Tayrans in their longstanding fisheries dispute with the Klasts, IF the Tayrans accepted this less-than-optimal Srol proposal. The Srols had made the offer in the expectation that this would be a simple, painless way to buy support for a peace process of great import to all Laminans. Moreover, it was not exactly a magnanimous offer; the Security Council of the Srol government had already decided to support the Tayrans in the fisheries dispute. They merely seized upon this opportunity to gain some more mileage out of their decision.

What the Srols didn't know was that one of their translators, Imago Afrogit, had been turned by the Klast Secret Service. This spectacular feat had been accomplished through an improbable series of coincidences that simultaneously embittered Afrogit to his own species and compromised his position there. Afrogit had been able to get the text of the secret assurance to his contacts in the KSS.

The revelation had a profound impact on the Klast senior policymakers. They had taken the Srol proposal to be a generous offer motivated by a sincere desire to maintain the peace, but now it appeared to be an element of a larger plan with ominous overtones. A Srol-Tayran-Jomkar condominium would completely upset the delicate Laminan balance of power. The Klasts were particularly frightened by what they ***didn't*** know. What promises had been made to the Jomkars? What other promises had been made to the Tayrans?

After much agonized debate, the Klasts decided to release the information publicly: this, they felt, would sway the still-neutral Frems and Lokweels in support of the Klasts and Ripis. Surely the neutrals would not stand by and watch a triumvirate steamroller the Klasts and Ripis.

The Klast revelation exploded the crisis to new heights. The Srols, caught with their pants down, responded with outrage at the violation of their diplomatic privacy, (Afrogit was charged with high treason and surely would have been shot had he survived the war.) The Srols argued that the Klast intrusion into the innermost workings of the Srol diplomatic corps was just as serious a violation of Srol sovereignty as Jomkar financing of Ripi radicals. If the Jomkar action could be taken to be an act of war, then surely the Klast action merited the same treatment

The arguments that the two sides were hurling at each other were primarily legalistic in intent, yet they created for both sides a terrible uncertainty. How could either side be sure that the other was merely arguing fine points of international law? What if these arguments were a justification-in-advance for military action? Serious. dedicated public officials. determined to maintain the peace, argued the intricacies of the situation for hours on end, and all came to much the same conclusion: if the other side is indeed contemplating military action, it would be wisest to place our own forces on an elevated defense posture. A reserved but firm posture will signal serious intent without provoking the situation. The armed forces of the contending nations were all given strict instructions to act with great restraint The Srols, determined not to allow any provocations, pulled their carrier group out of the Surimi straits and closer to home.

The situation, however, had created its own momentum. The armed services of the various countries all went to elevated alert status at approximately the same time. This created the false impression in all quarters that the military alerts of the other nations were frantic responses to their own military alerts. It only created an atmosphere of urgency, The Jomkars were especially nervous because of the exposed position of their forward bases on the Hediki Islands and placed the units there on full alert.

The nations of Lamina had all but talked themselves into a war. Fortunately, they still had sense enough to refrain from firing the first shot. Everybody clung nervously to the hope that the war could be confined to paper, But the military machine that operated completely under the control of its government has yet to be created; somewhere, some nervous junior officer

took the action that ignited the conflagration. History will never know if it really was Lt. Dagbar of the Jomkar Air Force, or Flt. Commander Subardan of the Ripi Naval Air Command, or even the unnamed soul who fired a few shots into the air control tower at Chu-Itu Air Base, but somehow, the shooting started. And, before anybody knew what was happening, the nuclear missiles were in the air

The Laminans were fortunate. Only sixty birds went up. Some of the others failed on launch; some were destroyed in the early attacks. Some launch officers refused to launch their missiles. For whatever reason, only a small portion of the warheads stockpiled on Lamina was detonated. But sixty warheads did enough damage. All of the major metropolitan areas of Lamina, and all seven capitals of the seven nations were destroyed. Only about 30 million people died in the explosions themselves, out of a total population of 3 billion. But the destructive effects of the bombs did not end when the mushroom clouds had dissipated. The radiation spread out killing many millions more and poisoning the land. Temperatures fell somewhat all over the planet, hindering the growth of crops untouched by radiation.

The greatest damage, though, was to the social structures of Lamina. The normal patterns of social behavior were destroyed. The farmers stopped growing food even where they had the capacity to do so; after all, who would buy their crops? The factory workers didn't bother to come to the factories that still stood, ready to produce. What was the point of manufacturing widgets anymore? The bombs' greatest effect was the most insidious: they destroyed the social contract Everybody lost faith in a society that they felt had been destroyed. Even though only 1% of the population perished in the blasts, and only 10% died from radiation in the weeks after the catastrophe, the surviving 90% didn't know what to do, which authority to obey, or what laws to respect. They had lost their faith in their societies, and that was the real catastrophe.

Society is an interlocking web, with each person linked to a thousand others in a network of cooperative support. When the Laminans let go of their ties to each other, they became a planet of individuals. The web collapsed, and the Laminans, in their billions, crashed to the ground like a wooden building whose nails have suddenly been removed. And they died in their billions. Lamina ground back in social time. When things finally stabilized, the population stood at 60 million.

Governor Grad

"I don't have complete information at this time. All I know is that I can't get through to the Space Office or any of the governmental liaison offices. I was able to get a patch into the telecomm net through a shortwave operator and here's what I learned from one person: the situation is utter chaos. They have not, I repeat, NOT 'blown up the entire planet: as brother Smick here says. There has been a nuclear exchange, and there has been heavy loss of life. But the person I spoke with was in Clymack, a medium-sized city, and he said emphatically that there has been no damage to the city and no radiation. Everyone's really scared, but otherwise, things seem normal enough. They've slapped down a curfew and started rationing; the authorities are having some problems keeping order. The situation is bad, but it's definitely NOT the end of the world:'

The six translators worked to keep up with the Governor. Before they could finish, there was a chorus of questions, demands, and challenges. The crowd wasn't really angry, but they were scared silly and their fear sounded in their voices. "One at a time. people. I've got all night'

It was a slow process. Each person had to state his question, which then had to be translated for everybody else. Then Governor Grad would give his answer, which again was translated. The colonists clung to their headphones, hanging on each word.

"How many warheads detonated? How much damage was there?"

"I don't know. I can't get the Space Office, and their facilities had lots of backup, so I'm pretty sure that Gilanox was destroyed. Similarly, I haven't been able to reach any of the government liaison space offices. That suggests to me that each of the seven capitals took a hit Of course, we would expect the capitals to be the first targets in any nuclear exchange, no matter how small."

'Who started it?"

The Governor paused. "The information I have is that the first shot was fired by a Srol."

There was an outbreak among the Srols. Several leapt up and screamed at the Governor. Some Jomkars on the other side of the cafeteria jumped up and began shouting at the Srols. Fists were raised, gesticulating threateningly. Several of the big Tayrans stood up ominously.

"Calm down! Calm down! Calm down!" the Governor screamed. 'We don't know who really started it. My information is fragmentary. We'll find out soon enough. But we don't need to start our own little war here. Settle down, please!"

'What's going to happen to us?"

"Now there's a more important question for all of us. Our plans for the colony anticipated the possibility of some disaster cutting us off from resupply. We have a ninety day supply of *everything* that this colony needs: food, fuel, medicines, everything. We have spare parts and backup units for all crucial equipment needed to run this colony We can take care of ourselves while they sort out this *mess* on Lamina. We will need to institute emergency measures to stretch our supplies until a resupply shuttle can be sent again. But we can do it, people. I just need your cooperation and your support."

For the first time, the crowd was silent. Then came a single, quiet question, from one of the Klasts: "Ninety days?"

"If we make a-concerted effort, I'm sure that we can stretch it out for longer. We can shut down all unnecessary use of power, increase pumping of water, and plant more fields. The situation isn't hopeless. We have to pull together, everyone. There *will* be a resupply ship. We just have to hold on until it comes."

"What if a resupply ship never comes!"

"It *will* come. The situation isn't that bad. They'll patch things up and get a resupply ship up to us sooner or later:

One of the Srols jumped up and began shouting. The translator had difficulty keeping up with his excited shouts. "The situation isn't that bad? You can't even get through to anybody in authority and you say the situation isn't that bad? You say that every one of the seven capitals has been destroyed and the situation isn't THAT BAD? You don't know what the hell you're talking about, mister! We are cut off!"

Grad's exasperation was starting to show. "lust sit down and stay calm. We're in a tight jam and we've got to keep order and work this thing through. I'll get through to the Space Office and get their advice on what we should do."

Now it was a Ripi who was shouting. "The Space Office? What can they do for us? They've screwed up almost everything involved with this whole colony and you want to rely on them for advice now? You can't even make contact with them! Screw the damn Space Office!"

"Now see here: I am Governor of this colony. My authority comes directly from the Space Office. They are my superiors. I swore an oath of loyalty and I intend to rigorously honor that oath. Now this meeting is getting out of hand so I want you all to go home, calm down, and in the morning..."

"You Jomkar son-of-a-bitch!" One of the Klasts leapt out of his seat and ran towards the Governor, whom he began to pummel with his fists. Prignine, the Lieutenant Governor and a Tayran, ran over and tore the Klast away from Grad, hurling him into the audience. At this several more Klasts dashed forward: several of the Jomkars moved to block their path and a ferocious fistfight developed. Two Ripis ran to the stage, shouting "Protect the Governor!" but Prignine didn't understand what they were saying and savagely kicked them away. The entire Ripi section stood up and began shouting, at which point some Tayrans fell on them, kicking and beating. The entire house erupted into battle, with perhaps three-quarters of the people trying to escape the melee. Governor Grad remained on the stage, shouting futilely for order and calm, trying to use gestures for people who weren't watching. A Jomkar dashed out and returned with a pole; a moment later, a Srol showed up with a spade. Grad jumped down and threaded through the fights, trying to pull combatants apart. A moment later he was struck on the head by a wrench. He fell, quivered, and lay still. People streamed out of the cafeteria, shouting and fighting. They left behind them the crumpled bodies of Grad and eighteen others. The battle didn't end, it simply dissolved into smaller pieces and spread itself out over thecolony.

Siboot was one of those who had run when it first started. He found himself cowering behind the radio shack with two other Ripis, a Lokweel, and a Klast. They all looked at each

other in fear Fortunately, the Klast was a translator and so, in the frightened gaps between looking out for approaching combatants, they took counsel. "Whatdo we do now?" was about all they could say to each other. They stayed up all night, scampering from hiding place to hiding place, trying to avoid anybody else. But as dawn neared, Siboot decided that the time had come to assert themselves. He stood up and announced, "I'm going to the main courtyard under a white flag of peace. Who's coming?" They all looked around at each other, and they all came. They marched to the main courtyard as the sun was rising. On any other day Prignine would have showed up at about this time to raise the flag of the Space Office, but today he was not to be found. They found a white sheet and raised it instead, and then stood in a circle around the flagpole, calling out in all languages, "No more fighting!"

People began to filter out of their hiding places. They watched warily from the shadows, peering through windows and around corners at the little group. Then, one by one or three by three, they scampered out of their hiding places and into the little ring. Within ten minutes Siboot had twenty people, and at least one from each race. He organized them to shout the phrase, "No more fighting!" in their own language, in sequence. Six times the phrase would be sounded in six different languages, and then would come an eery silence as the Frems signed the same demand in their own language. And more people joined the group. As they added their voices to the chorus, it gained in volume until it could be heard throughout the village. When at last Siboot judged that all who could come had come, he raised his hand for silence and said, "Friends, let us ponder our fate together?

A Walk in the Garden

Siboot and Iburical left the clamor of the meeting room for a quiet discussion. "Let's go to the vegetable garden:' Siboot suggested. "I find it so satisfying to stand in a green place with living things. It is such a refreshing antidote to the barren rock and sand of Kira." So they walked through the rows of tomatoes and cabbages, discussing the future of the colony.

"Where to begin?" Iburical asked. "There are so many problems to attack Should we put our energies into augmenting our water supply and food production, as Kefscape wants? Or should we concentrate on developing some limited industrial capacity so that we can at least maintain our current stock of equipment, as Bertoct would have us do? Or any of the other proposals that have divided us!"

"Not to worry about our will to unity, Iburical. We colonists all argue vehemently about the proper course of action, but we are all sensible people. We are deeply affected by the fate of our homelands. We shall stick together no matter what. Did you notice the gentlemanliness with which the debate was conducted? Frightened we are, indeed!"

"Will it last? Is this gentlemanliness fright or shock? Will we lose our sense of respect and unity with the passage of time? Are we Laminans hopelessly fractious, doomed to destroy ourselves? Is there any hope for us?"

They walked quietly for a while. Iburical answered his own question: "I think we are. Doomed, I mean. We Laminans have never learned to live together. It's in our spirits. This emergency has scared the bile out of us, but in time the old ways will return."

They walked a ways further. Finally Siboot spoke. "No, Iburical, we are not doomed. We make our own answers out here. We can accept the ways of the past, but it would be an act of will on our part to do so. What hold does the past have on us? Lamina, the old ways, the Space Office, the Seven Nations-those things are all gone. The only reality is what we have here on Kira, and what we carry in our hearts. When I first came to Kira, Iburical, I realized that we came here not to colonize the planet but to colonize our own spirits. We came here to mine the depths of our souls and see if we could find some vein of goodness in them. We haven't struck gold yet, but we've found some likely rocks. There is still cause for hope."

"I wish there were something more substantial than the emergency mood that now galvanizes us all. I wish that we had something tangible, some honest ray of hope for the Seven Species:'

"There is something. I've been working on it since I first came here, but I've kept it secret all this time. Governor Grad would have sent me home on the first shuttle had he known what I was up to."

They came to the end of the rows of vegetables. Siboot stopped and stared out into the emptiness of the Kiran desert.

"Well? Aren't you going to tell me about this Dark Secret that would either save the Seven Species or get you sent home?"

"I'm trying, I'm trying. I'm not very good at it yet. It takes great concentration. What would you like to eat right now?"

Iburical was thrown off balance by the question. "What do I want to eat? You just told me

that you could save what's left of civilization and now you try to welch on telling me about it by talking about dinner? Are you playing some sort of game with me?"

"Just relax. If you could have anything you wanted right now, what would it be?" He pulled a notepad out of his pocket and scribbled something onto it. "Just stare at that hill and ask yourself, 'What would I like to eat? "

Iburical was confused, but he complied. He looked over at the hill, halfway expecting it to hold a sign announcing that 'THE ANSWER IS...' but there was nothing to see on the hill except more of the orange sand that was everywhere else.

Then it hit him. Actually, it was more like it swam into his consciousness. He was suddenly aware of an ice-cream sundae. It wasn't a real ice-cream sundae. It was more like an idealized ice-cream sundae, placed in a theoretically pure dish, with a perfect coating of fudge on top. It wasn't a vision: he couldn't see anything other than the hill and the sand. He couldn't smell or taste it He was simply aware of an ice-cream sundae, or rather, of "ice-cream-sundae-ness." Although the image lacked any sensory substance, it was undoubtedly real in his own mind.

"That's funny. Now that you mention it, I'd kinda like an ice-cream sundae. I don't know why, it just came to me. You think there might be one last shuttle left on Lamina that might bring me an ice-cream sundae?"

He was laughing lightly at his tiny joke and he almost choked on his laughter when Siboot held up his notepad with the words "ice-cream sundae" scribbled on it.

Funeral for a Civilization

Siboot stood at the rostrum and waited for the last few people to move into the cafeteria and settle down. It was at this very rostrum, just one year earlier, that Governor Grad had met his end. On that night the world had turned upside down for Siboot and all the other colonists. On that night, everything changed. And tonight, from the same rostrum, he would bring to a close the first stage of the changes that had befallen the little colony.

The translators began moving into their positions, and people began placing the little headphones over their ears. Siboot wondered how long it would be before he could talk to everyone in eeyal. Which would be the slower task, he wondered, discovering the language or teaching it to the people? The crowd was ready: it was time to begin.

"Good evening, my friends. Today is the first anniversary of the nuclear war that destroyed our homelands. For one year we have watched and waited for some communication from Lamina, a signal, any sign at all that there are people left on the planet There has been absolutely nothing-no television transmissions, no radio transmissions, nothing. We have watched the surface closely for any signs of activity, but we have seen nothing. None of the normal signs of civilization that we would expect are visible."

"This does not necessarily mean that everybody is dead on Lamina. Our resident experts believe that it is quite possible that there remain small settlements of people growing their own food. But there is no civilization left on Lamina. Of that we can be certain."

"This is a painful thing for us to face. For the first few days we clung to the vain hope that there might still be one more supply shuttle. Then we told ourselves that a shuttle would be mounted in six months. For these last few months we have been telling ourselves that they are trying to cope with the disruptions caused by the war, that as soon as they can, they will re-establish radio contact with us. A year has passed without any sign from them that they are even alive. The time has come for us to face the truth: our civilization is dead. If Fate has smiled on us, perhaps the Seven Species still live on Lamina. But the civilization that nurtured us is gone forever. It is time for us to bury it and our false hopes."

A wail broke out from the right side of the cafeteria. Siboot signalled harshly for silence. The sobs were muffled. Siboot stared long and hard at the audience, his eyes sweeping over the eyes of the colonists. His next words he pronounced slowly and emphatically:

"There will be no more shuttles, not in our lifetimes and probably never. There will be no rescue. We are alone. We are the last fragment of Laminan civilization:'

There was not a breath from the audience. They stared at him in utter silence. For an instant, Siboot wondered if they understood the import of his words.

"Every funeral mourns the dead. But we have grieved for a year already. We have suffered in ignorance of the fate of our homelands and our friends and relatives. This funeral serves to put an end to the mourning that saps our will."

"There remains some hope that the Seven Species still live. We will continue to watch and listen, to transmit on a regular schedule, and to hope that someday somebody will talk back to us. But for now we must acknowledge to ourselves that these remain dim hopes, unlikely to be realized in our lifetimes:'

"We must now turn to the matter of our future. Kira is now the fragile repository of all that was Laminan. Here Srols and Tayrans, Jomkars and Frems, Klasts and Lokweels, and Ripis, too, all continue to live. Look at one another-for all of our differences, we are all we have now. The many achievements of Lamina are now our heritage to pass on, for we are the only ones to pass it on. The literature, the technology, the understanding of the universe, the wisdom of our philosophers, the music, all the things that elevate us and give meaning to our lives, we must preserve."

"But we must also remember that Laminan civilization was also self-destructive. It lies in ashes now, and for a very good reason. If we only replicate that civilization, we shall surely suffer the same fate. We must today bury the old civilization and celebrate the birth of a new one, the child of the old civilization."

He paused and glanced at Iburical and Kefscape on the right side of the cafeteria; they nodded back at him, ready On the left, Redlistik and Grilfin nodded gravely.

"I want each of you to stand up and shout in your native tongue, 'Lamina is dead!' Do it, now!"

The crowd stood up nervously and paused, waiting for a cue. Siboot's assistants provided the cue, shouting in the different tongues, and soon the crowd began to follow. It came with confusion at first, for the inchoate roar of six tongues being shouted simultaneously was enough to confuse everybody. But the people caught on soon enough, and the shout became a chant Tears rolled down cheeks as the people released a year's worth of desperate, unfulfilled hopes. Siboot let them carry on as long as there was energy behind it; then he signalled for silence and all sat down again.

"Now I want you to close your eyes and listen carefully to the words that I will speak directly to your minds. This is something new; I call it eeyal, and I want you to learn it:'

He closed his eyes and signalled as hard as he could, "I!' Iburical and the others, sensing his eeyal-speak, chimed in, adding the strength of their own signals to Siboot's. The image floated through the audience, prompting gasps and squeals.

Siboot paused for a few seconds to gather his strength. Then he sent the next image, "am." Again, his assistants augmented Siboot's message.

The audience was waiting for the next word eagerly: there could be no doubt now about the innate ahility of all species to understand eeyal. Siboot eased off the effort and sent it out easily, lightly: "Kiran."

He waited for a long moment, staring into a sea of closed eyes. Then they began to pop open, and he looked into each pair of eyes hopefully. People stood up, intense with feeling but unable to express it. They milled about, looking at Siboot for guidance, but he offered none, wishing to have them find their own expression. There were a number of disjointed attempts to echo Siboot's eeyal back at him, but they were too weak to pull it off. Then somebody shouted in Tayran, "Lamina is dead! Long live Kira!" Several others took up the shout Somebody translated it into Jomkar and the Jomkars joined in. Then everybody was shouting, and the Frems gesticulating, the same chant.

So ended the funeral for a civilization.

Stargazing

"Anything new tonight, Hortz?"

"I don't think so. I haven't finished my search, but it seems pretty much like normal. It's hard, though. The features change under the changing lighting. When I first started this job, I spent almost every night discovering all sorts of things that weren't really there."

"Do you mean you were seeing mirages, or hallucinating under the stress?"

Hortz pulled away from the eyepiece and laughed. He looked at Fredegund, trying to make out her face, but his retina still retained the burned-in image of Lamina's surface. He needed to rest his eyes for a few minutes anyway.

"No, no, I certainly wasn't hallucinating, although Siboot certainly thought so after I'd shaken him awake for the umpteenth time to show him something in the scope. No, I was seeing changes, they just weren't changes caused by people. You just don't realize how much a planet's surface can appear to change when viewed from a distance. Here, let me show you. Look in the eyepiece."

Fredegund sat down in the stool and peered through the telescope. "Where am I looking?"

"It's Habinda; the northern half is obscured by clouds. Can you recognize the shape now?"

"Yes, yes, I see it! But wait...I thought that the Bay of Escobar was on the western coast of Habinda. This looks like it's on the east."

"This is an inverting telescope-everything's reversed. You just have to use some imagination:'

"OK, I've got it. What did you want me to look at?"

"See the mountain range behind the Bay of Escobar? It's marked by long, dark shadows."

"Got it."

"Good. Now look closely at the land between the mountains and the bay. What color is it?"

"Looks like a light green to me. Green with a little yellow mixed in."

"I agree. Now, if you were to come back here in three nights and look again, you'd swear that it had changed color to darkgreen. And in fact, it *would* have changed color. When I first saw that, I thought sure I had proof that they were planting or digging or doing something. But then it changed back to light green a few days later, and I went nuts trying to figure out what those crazy Frems were up to. Then I checked the geography book. What an embarrassment!, That section of terrain is-or was-a national park, a big jupine forest."

"OK...so what? Maybe they chopped down all the trees."

"No, they didn't do anything. I was just seeing the trees from different angles. The first night, when we see Habinda on the eastern limb of the planet, as we now see it, we're looking at the forest from an angle, but on the third or fourth night we're looking almost straight down on the forest. Have you ever seen a jupine?"

"No, but I've seen pictures. They're just real big pine trees, right?"

'Yeah, that's right But the trick is, the needles always point ***upward. So*** when you look at a jupine sideways, you see the needles sideways, and they're bright green, but when you look down on one, you see mostly the dark spaces between the needles!"

"I see." Fredegund's tone of voice indicated that she was not as impressed with such trivialities as Hortz was. "Have you ever seen anything indicating that people are still alive up there?"

"No, I haven't. You'd know if I had-Id have danced through the streets with the news. I look for lights on the dark side of the planet, but their absence doesn't mean much. People won't start using outdoor lighting until they've got power plants running. I've been concentrating on agriculture. If they're alive up there, they've got to be growing crops, and fields of crops might get big enough for me to see. So far, though, I've seen nothing."

"Doesn't that mean that they're all dead?"

"No, they could be farming plots too small for me to see. I figure I couldn't see a field less than three kilometers square. That's a pretty big field. It would have to be the work of a small farming community, supplying food to thousands of people. Mostly I've been concentrating on the same river valleys that were the cradles of the earliest civilizations: the valleys of the Rendox, Farlit, and Kefra Rivers. Like I say so far I've seen nothing,"

"Could you show me my home town? It's near Crablox."

"Sure, Ill try. I doubt that you'll be able to see anything, though. It's the rainy season in Carbinia and the place has been under clouds for the last few weeks. Here, Ill let you do it; just turn these knobs here to move the telescope."

It took Fredegund a few moments to get the hang of the controls, but she finally managed to bumble her way to the region of Carbinia. "This is great! There are clouds over both coasts, but the interior of the country is sunny!"

"I doubt that you'll discover any evidence of people; the whole countryside is green this time of year. They could be cultivating the entire continent and we wouldn't know."

"Oh, look, there's Cholin Reservoir! I learned how to swim there!"

"No, you're mistaken. The dam was destroyed or something in the war. That reservoir's been empty ever since. You're probably looking at Montfelly Bay.'

"No, no, I remember the shape of both Cholin Reservoir and Montfelly Bay from the maps, and this is definitely NOT Montfelly Bay. I must admit, though, it looks a lot smaller than Cholin Reservoir, but it IS in the right place relative to the coastline:'

"Here, let me have a look" Hortz didn't wait for Fredegund to vacate her seat; he leaned over her shoulder and looked down the eyepiece.

"Oh, my god, it IS Cholin Reservoir! They've repaired the dam!"

Siboot's Last Sermon

"My friends: I have taken ill and Dr. Eilen tells me that I shall probably not survive the week I am, therefore, taking this opportunity to say goodbye to all of you.

I leave with much optimism and some fear for the future. We have done so much together, and we all are deservedly proud of our achievements. We inherited a world that had destroyed itself, We nearly destroyed ourselves in insane imitation of our mother society. But we didn't. We found another way, and we have pursued that other course and prospered.

Much work remains, work that you must carry on. Although each colonist can understand and use eeyal, there remain wide gaps in proficiency with the language. I would like to see those gaps closed, for my own experience indicates that no species is innately handicapped in the use of eeyal. You must improve training in the language. Along with this goes the task of extending the language itself It pains me that this, my last sermon, must be given in my native tongue and translated to each of you. I had hoped that the day would come when we could all speak together in a single language. We have made the start, but you must finish it.

You must also continue the exploration of the mental powers revealed by eeyal. I am certain that further experience with eeyal will uncover additional faculties shared by all Laminans. I can only add this: think in threes.

I abjure you to continue the transmissions to Lamina. It is difficult, I know, expending so much effort to send messages to a home planet that may not be listening and will not respond. But remember that it is far easier for them to receive than to transmit. We know that they are alive; we know that they have some capabilities. We must continue to transmit, in the hope that somebody is listening Please don't abandon this effort-it is so important to the future of the home planet. For if they have no future, do we?

I worry that you will consume your energies in contention with each other. This is the price we all pay for my long Shepherdship. You must choose a new Shepherd. Select a person who is strong of mind, a master of eeyal, for such persons can lead you to the only viable future we have. I don't know..."

At this point Siboot began to cough violently. Dr. Eilen led him away. He never finished his sermon.

Shaleen's Sermon

Shaleen stood outside the radio shack, trying to stay in the thin sliver of shade next to the wall. It was a scorcher of a day; it would be flaming hot inside the shack She felt sympathy for Foctrin, who was just finishing up his sermon. He had been at it for thirty minutes; how he maintained his concentmtion in that oven she could not understand. And he was a Tayran! She, at least, had the advantage of a smaller, more easily-cooled body.

Foctrin's voice changed tone. He was ending his sermon with the standard request for anyone who was listening to reply on the same frequency. She didn't understand Tayran but she knew the formula, and she could follow his meaning from the pauses. After three tries, he signed off. He wasted no time opening the door and getting outside to the cooler air.

"Talk was good?" she asked.

"Talk was good-good. They throw flowers to Foctrin."

"Tayrans throw flowers?"

They both laughed at the image.

Shaleen entered the shack It was hot and stuffy, but not as oven-like as she had feared. Her session would not be torture, just uncomfortable. The equipment was all set up and running. She sat down at the microphone, and checked her watch. She had a few minutes to kill. She organized her thoughts. At precisely 13:00, she flicked on the microphone.

"Good day fellow Lokweels on Lamina. This is Shaleen, your friend on Kira. I'm hoping that Fate has been good to you this week and that each of you has found something new within yourself:

"We've done well this week One of our Jomkar women, Shenlow, gave birth to a beautiful little boy this week Have I told you how we greet a new Kiran? The birth is assisted by a committee of midwives, one woman from each species. Siboot taught us that motherhood means more to mothers than species-hood, and so we have this custom that mothers from all species participate in the birth of every Kiran child. And you know, Siboot was right! I was waiting outside, and when Daframe, the Srol mother, came out to announce the successful birth, there were tears of joy on her cheeks."

"A few hours later they had the birth procession. They carried Shennie and her baby to the cafeteria, where all the Kirans were assembled. Shennie presented the child to Arien, who held up the baby for all to see. Arien then made a little speech welcoming the child to Kira, and all the gathered Kirans added their own welcomes, and all the mothers in the audience cried with joy. You know, we can't have many children here on Kim. There isn't enough food for more than 250 mouths, so each woman is allowed only two children in her lifetime. A birth on Kira doesn't happen very often. We have learned the value of life here on Kira. If only we had all learned that lesson before the war.'

"The redberries are starting to come in this week We all just love to eat redberries. It's funny, when people first came to Kira, they all had different tastes in food, and of course, different species still have different dietary requirements, but nowadays, we can't afford to cater to all the different tastes. We don't have any sweets on Kira, so if you've been thinking

that Kira is some sort of heaven, forget it! Peace and love, yes; candy bars, no."

"Anyway, the redberries are the sweetest thing that we grow here, and of course they don't keep, so basically we all gorge ourselves on them when the crop comes in. We have a festival, The Redberry Festival, to celebrate the berries and we organize the biggest, wildest orgy of redbeny guzzling ever. Everybody wears red and makes up stupid redberry jokes and generally carries on like a fool. We're all looking forward to Redberry Festival, which starts next week My next transmission will take place right in the middle of Redberry Festival, so if I sound a little silly, don't worry."

"We had a bad accident this week Thrilken, the dearest, sweetest old Ripi, was injured when some boxes fell on him. When I was a little girl, Thrilken used to make little dolls for me out of corn husks. It was so clever the way he could fold. wrap, and tie them until they looked just like real people. He could make Jomkar dolls, Srols, Lokweels, any of the Seven Species, and I used to play with them all. I learned how to say 'Thank you' in Ripi just for Thrilken-have you ever tried to say *anything* in Ripi? It's almost impossible!-and when I finally thanked him, he put his hand on my head and said something back but I don't know what he said. Dear old Thrilken. He's badly hurt, and everybody is pulling for him. I hope you'll think of him tonight."

"I know that I talk too much about Boxlen. By now, most of you have probably guessed that I kind of like Boxlen. I suppose that you have gotten sick and tired of hearing all sorts of boring stories about Boxlen. Well, here I go again! Bear with me!"

"Three nights ago we had a little social for young unmarrieds down at the cafeteria. Boxlen was there, and he and I had a nice talk We went out for a little walk You know, you have Kira as a moon, and at night it illuminates things when it's full. Well, I've never seen Kira from Lamina, but I can tell you that Lamina is beautiful when it rises above the dunes, full and blue and round. It's so big, it lights up everything. We talked about Lamina; we both wondered how things are going for you, and especially how things are going in Julipore. We've never been there or seen it, of course, just old pictures, but it *is* our homeland. We worry about you, fellow Lokweels, and hope that all is well with you.",

"Well, it looks like my time is about up. As always, I wish that you could talk back to me; I have so many questions to ask you. You know the procedure: if you do have anything to say, say it now."

She flipped the microphone switch from TALK to LISTEN. At the same time, she leaned back in her chair and eeyalled, *"Just a minute. Almost finished." She knew* that Salmin was outside the shack, getting ready for his sermon; he was apparently talking to somebody else, and the noise was distracting her. She grumbled to herself that another broadcaster, of all people, should appreciate and respect the rules mandating silence around the radio shack Damn him anyway.

And then she noticed that something was wrong. The white noise that always sounded on the speaker when she left it on LISTEN was different There was a faint modulation to it She leaned forward, listening intently. Salmin's response came in mentally, "OK *hurry* up!" and she screamed back, *"Shut up! Shut* up!" She listened very carefully and then heard it plainly, a voice saying something over the noise. It was badly broken up, but she could tell that it was speaking in Lokweel. She couldn't make out enough to make sense of it, but first she heard

the word "Kira," then "Lamina." When she heard her name pronounced, a thin cry, almost of pain, escaped her lips.

"Hurry up, Shaleen!" Salmin said. She looked away from the speaker, frantic. She bounded to the door, tore it open, grabbed Salmin by the shoulders and began screaming in Lokweel, "They're here! They're talking to me!" Salmin and his friends backed away from her, taken aback by her explosion. One of them ran to find a translator or somebody who could help. Shaleen stood at the door of the shack screaming in the general direction of the village, "Lamina! They're alive! They're talking back to me!"

Arien was at the warehouse, straightening out a dispute over responsibilities, when they told him that Shaleen had gone crazy. His first reaction was concern for the well-being of one of his people, but when somebody mentioned that she was at the radio shack, an intimation, a possibility, a hope, popped up inside him. He started walking briskly towards the radio shack, asking questions as he went. What was she doing? She was giving her sermon. Oh my God, he thought Was she finished with her sermon? Yes, Salmin was waiting to give his sermon. Arien broke into a run.

He waded through the crowd at the door and elbowed into the shack. Shaleen was seated at the microphone, sniffling and wiping away tears as she spoke. He didn't need to understand Lokweel to know what she was saying. "Where have you been? How are you? How many people are left? We've been so *worried* about you." That's what any Kiran would have said.

Artigul the Teacher

"That's enough for you today. You're tired. Go home, get a good night's sleep, work hard tomorrow morning to clear your mind, and show up tomorrow ready for another lesson."

The student stood, a little frustrated and sheepish at his poor performance in the day's lesson. He left quietly.

Artigul visibly brightened when he saw that the next student was Amilcar; Amilcar was a fast learner and sent strong, pronounced images.

Greetings, he signalled to Amilcar, but Amilcar's own ***Greetings*** was already crowding back at him. It was, as always, a bright powerful image, so much stronger than the weak, uncertain signals that most beginners sent It had more raw power than the images that mature speakers of eeyal sent, but it was clumsy and unpolished, and so not as clear.

Amilcar feel ***how?*** he asked, and the response flashed back, ***Amilcar feel strong.*** Good for you, Amilcar. Your images feel strong to me, too.

And so they commenced the lesson, with Artigul sending messages and critiquing Amilcar's responses. At times they had to break into Amilcar's native Srol language to clarify a point, but such interruptions were infrequent and concerned points that were simply not expressible in eeyal. After two generations, eeyal was still a clumsy language. Based as it was on fundamental idea-symbols common to the Seven Species, it was not so much created as discovered, and the process of discovery was slowed by the tedious process of developing the mental powers necessary for speaking eeyal.

Throughout the lesson. Artigul was struck bv an oddity to Amilcar's images. Thev were powerful, yes; that was the first thing that he had noticed about Amilcar. But there was-something else about Amilcar's eeyal, something he had noticed before. Amilcar's images had a flavor to them, a kind of mental coloring, an aura. He had noticed that some people seemed to speak eeyal with an "accent,"but had never thought much of it With Amilcar, though, the accent was pronounced, and it seemed as if he had heard it before without noticing it Artigul drank in the flavor of it, noted it carefully. Somehow, it was important.

The lesson ended, Artigul sought out Arien, the Shepherd of Kira and another powerful speaker of eeyal. Although Artigul was by occupation fluent in all seven languages, he initiated the conversation in eeyal. ***Amilcar speak*** *well,* he observed. ***Artigul teach*** *well,* Arien retorted. There was the same feeling of power that he had gotten from Amilcar, but the flavor was different. It was every bit as striking, every bit as distinctive, but it was not the same aura. Artigul refrained from revealing his thoughts to Arien and ended the conversation.

Off he hurried to see Sertgrid, the Transmissions-Person and another strong speaker of eeyal. A quick conversation in eeyal revealed the same sense of powerful imagery, the same distinctive flavor: it was the same aura that Amilcar used! Artigul engaged Sertgrid for some time, to make absolutely certain, until Sertgrid demanded to know why they were talking in eeyal when Artigul was perfectly fluent in Jomkar. Artigul hastily excused himself and ran directly to Amilcar's home. Bursting in, he fixed Amilcar with a stare and demanded, ***Clock how big?*** to which Amilcar replied, after a confused pause, ***Clock is 20:30.*** There was abso-

lutely no doubt: Amilcar's aura was exactly the same as Sertgrid's! Artigul screamed with delight and dashed out of the house.

Well, he certainly was pleased to learn the time," Amilcar's mother observed.

Artigul paced down the trail, trying to put together the pieces. The auras he had felt were not unique to each speaker. This was not just a case of different minds speaking with different tones. No, there was something fundamental here, some central reality he was close to. Spying Ferliki's house, he knocked and entered. There he found Grotilda, Ferliki's wife. Clock how ***big?*** he asked. She stared at him for a moment, then spoke in Ripi, 'Artigul, I passed my final examination. Is this some sort of pop quiz!"

"Please, I need to hear you speak in eeyal. It's important!"

Clock is 20:35 "Did I do it right?"

"You did just tine. Thank you, thank you!" Off he went into the night.

From house to house he went, demanding to know the time in eeyal, ignoring the looks of surprise and bemusement. He felt the tone of each reply, and within an hour he had a grip on the problem. Some speakers used Amilcar's aura, some used Arien's, and some didn't seem to have any aura at all. By the ***time*** he reached his own home, he had it worked out.

There was a scale of aura, with two poles. The first pole he called "katsin:' after an old Frem word meaning "left hand." The second pole he called "shial," from the ***Frem*** word for "right hand:' Some people, like Amilcar and Sertgrid, were strong in katsin. Others, like Arien, were strong in shial. Others had no strong leaning and lay in the middle of the scale. All very strong speakers of eeyal were at the extremes of the scale.

He was very pleased with this hypothesis, so pleased that he suddenly realized his intense hunger. He set to making himself a quick meal. He was carrying the plate to the dinner table, humming to himself, when suddenly he froze and stopped humming; the plate slipped out of his hands.

What about me? he thought. Where do I fit on the scale? I don't tit in the middle, because I know that I am a strong speaker of eeyal. Everybody tells me that, and my appointment as teacher is objective confirmation of that fact. OK, so I belong on one of the extremes. Suppose that I am a katsin-person. Why would other katsin-people have a strikingly ***different*** feel to their eeyal? Wouldn't they seem natural and normal ("just like me")? Wouldn't only shial-people seem different? And if I were a shial-person, wouldn't it be the other way around?

More questions began to flood in. What about Tozuz, a middling-good speaker of eeyal, who responded to Artigul's clock-query with no obvious aura? He speaks eeyal better than some of the people who had a definite katsin-flavor.

The answer came to him from simple logic the people who had no noticeable aura don't lack an aura. They just share the same aura I have. That's why I don't notice their auras. I only notice the different ones, the alien ones.

Which means that there are three auras!

Artigul knew what Siboot had meant when he said in his last sermon, "Think in threes." Perhaps he would have told us if he had lived longer.

He sat down and made a list of all the people he had spoken with that evening. Beside each person's name, he wrote down that person's aura, species, and Artigul's estimate of that person's image strength. This forced him to come up with a name for his own aura. He decided

on "tanaga," an old Jomkar word for “magnificent hero.” Heh-heh.

The table revealed much. There were no correllations between species and aura, or between sex and aura, or even image strength and aura. It seemed that the auras were distributed evenly and randomly through the population. He felt certain, though, that some people were blessed with more of their aura than others were, but he didn’t know what that meant.

Sufupicank Inaugural Sermon

"It's all set up and ready Your transmission will go to Trebizond; they've got a group of translators set up there who will translate and rebroadcast your sermon all over Lamina. From what they tell me, every radio on the planet is tuned to this frequency, ready to hear the news first, even if it is in Tayran. They'll all flip back to the translation-program frequency as soon as they hear your voice for real:'

'Very good, Sertgrid. I am ready?

"Just flip that switch when you're ready and speak into the microphone. Ill notify you if there are any problems."

Sufupican settled into the chair, eyeing the microphone and the battery of electronic knobs and dials. She had always harbored a secret longing to learn these mysterious devices, but the opportunity had never arisen. This was a hell of way to get the opportunity

There was no point in dawdling any longer, not with a billion Iaminans waiting to hear her voice. She leaned forward, threw the "Transmit" switch with alacrity, and began her sermon:

"Salutations, my flock I am Sufupican, the Third Shepherd of Kira. I convey my deepest regrets that I cannot as yet live up to the noble ideal that Siboot established for us and address you all in eeyal. Someday that will be possible, but for today we must live with the sad reality that I am too imperfect to speak to you in any other than my native tongue."

"I have been chosen for the Shepherdship because I prevailed in a contest of auras. There were other contenders, one from each species, and it took three rounds to gain my victory. I matched my tanaga against another's katsin, and so emerged victorious. It was a difficult situation for each of us, for we do not enjoy contending with our fellow Khans. Each of us did his or her best so that you on Lamina would know that your interests were defended, that a member of your species fought hard to win the Shepherdship. We are now united again, for we on Kira do not place any great importance on the species of the Shepherd, but rather on his or her quality. Fate has chosen me for that place, and I will now take that place and accept the responsibilities it brings. From this day forward, I will think of myself not as a Tayran, not even as a Khan, but as the Shepherd of all Khans and all Iaminans. You may submit your disputes to me in full confidence that I will adjudicate them with absolute objectivity and concern for the welfare of all Iaminans."

"There is a greater lesson in this conflict that we fought. It concerns the meaning of the auras. Know, my flock that power conquers love, love overwhelms truth, and truth prevails over power. Remember it always; it is a great truth:'

"I conclude this sermon by looking backwards. We have lost Arien, a great Shepherd and a true leader of all Laminans. We all grieve for our loss. I hope that you will also pray for me, that I may prove a worthy successor to that great one."

"I convey you tranquility."

She flipped the switch oft leaned far back in the chair, and heaved a great sigh. I sure hope I didn't screw up, she thought

Mind Combat

Feslym stood waiting at the porch to his hut, leaning against the post, watching the sunset, thinking hard as the image of the sun burned into his retinas. Nightfall was upon him; it was time to make a decision. Should he attack Theorid or Menkili? Theorid was strong in tanaga and weak in katsin, he knew that for a certainty. But little good the knowledge did him. It meant only that Theorid would probably use his tanaga. Feslym's greatest strength was in katsin; if he used his katsin against Theorid's tanaga, he would only lose it And Feslym's weakness was in shial, exactly the aura needed to defeat tanaga, and in tanaga, which could only standoff against Theorid's tanaga. Feslym's strength was in katsin, which would be beaten by Theorid's tanaga.

On the other hand, he knew that Menkili was strong in shial. That suggested the perfect solution to Feslym's problem: if he attacked Menkili with his abundant katsin, and Menkili used her own abundant shial, then Feslym's katsin would take Menkili's shial, and Feslym would be one shial richer. The danger was that he didn't know how much tanaga or katsin Menkili had. If Menkili was strong in either of those, she might use one of them instead of her shial, and Feslym's katsin would lose to Menkili's tanaga or standoff Menkili's katsin.

What to do, what to do? A safe but useless victory against Theorid, or a risky but decisive attack against Menkili?

If I beat Theorid tonight, I shall still have to face Menkili tomorrow night. I can never win the Shepherdship with so little shial. I must win more shial, and Menkili is the only one I am likely to win it from.

The sun had set and the stars were already coming out He walked inside and sat down on the mat on the floor. He meditated, gathering his strength. Then he lay down deliberately, face up with his arms laying at his sides. palms up. He closed his eves and sent his mind to sleep. Soon he felt the fire within himself glow and erupt into flame..He was ready.

He sent his spirit reaching out across the black empty space of what was poetically called "The Land of Auras." He could see little fireflies, pinpoints of light, that were the normal people of Kira, the untrained ones whose minds were only strong enough to speak eeyal. He had to remind himself not to feel superior; once he had been like them. Only the long years of training had given him this much reach, and he had been selected for that training as the representative of his species.

Then his spirit caught the feel of Menkili's, and he readied himself for combat He concentrated his katsin-ness, wrapped it around himself, thrust it forward. Now he was directly aware of Menkili's spirit, a blazing ball of tire, large and powerful. He was frightened by the size and energy of Menkili's spirit; perhaps Menkili was the rightful Shepherd. He could not know how he appeared to others: perhaps Menkili was just as intimidated by Feslym's own spirit

The two spirits engaged: the power of their impact would have shattered a lesser spirit Through the violence of the contact, though, Feslym could easily sense the shial-aura that Menkili had used against him. He had outguessed Menkili! In triumph his spirit pulsated and grew, sweeping into and through Menkili's spirit, draining away the shial that she had mistak-

enly used against Feslym. Menkili's beaten spirit flickered and blinked out, returning to Menkili to regain its strength:

Barely had that combat ended than a new one began. Theorid's spirit appeared, smaller than Menkili's but no less dangerous in such encounters. Theorid would not be Shepherd, but he could influence the outcome of the long contest behveen Feslvm and Menkili.

Feslym w-thought the katsin that he-had used to defeat Menkili and replaced it with a shial. It was the perfect ruse. Theorid would not be expecting him to use an aura in which he was weak Of course, the shial he had just gained from Menkili changed that Just as Feslym expected, Theorid used one of his tanagas, and Feslym won his second victory of the night.

Feslym awoke; he was lying face down several feet from the mat. Dried blood was caked around his nostrils and, as he struggled to his feet, he felt the aching in his joints that told him he had spent another night thrashing wildly in his aura-sleep. He very much hoped that it would end soon; he was surely reaching the end of his tether, This morning, though, there was a cluster of people waiting outside his door, with more coming to join the growing crowd. The little fireflies might not be able to participate in mind-combat, but they certainly were aware of its existence and outcome. Menkili appeared and elbowed her way to the front; she stood on the porch beside Feslym.

"Feslym has attained completeness: he has won in mental combat a balanced set of tanaga, katsin, and shial. I accept him as our new Shepherd."

There were no other possible rivals; the representatives of the other species had all been put out of contention in the previous weeks. Feslym became the Fourth Shepherd of Kira.

Feslym's Daughter

One of Feslym's first acts after ascending to the Shepherdship was to take a wife. The duties of an acolyte are too great to tolerate the distractions of a family, and so the custom had developed that acolytes put off marriage until after a new Shepherd had been chosen or they had passed the baton to a successor. The problems of choosing a mate on Kira were simplified by the small population. With only 264 souls on Feslym's accession, divided among seven species, therewereonly about twenty femalesof eachspecies. At any given time, only two might be available for marriage. Thus, there wasn't much choice. Romance got short shrift under such conditions.

Feslym was fortunate enough to have three female Klasts from which to choose. Being the Shepherd, there was little question as to their own willingness to be his spouse; the Shepherd's spouse enjoyed some minor privileges that were, in the harsh environment of Kira, luxuries. When Feslym offered his hand to Nafimko, she accepted without hesitation.

Exactly one year and two months later, Kendra was born. Despite the fact that the birth had no political significance, it was nevertheless greeted with pleasure by Kirans and Laminans alike. Kendra would have no special claims to the Shepherdship, but it was generally believed that mental powers were in some way founded in genes, and so the offspring of a Shepherd were held in special regard. Moreover, there lingered in all Laminans some fondness for the ceremony and splendor of royalty, and a royal birth had been a matter of great importance in the middle histories of all species except the Frems.

The significance of Kendra's birth was elevated by the fact that she was the first child born to a sitting Shepherd. Arien had been infertile and Sufupican's husband died shortly after she became Shepherd. Her birth was thus a matter of great significance to Kirans and Laminans alike; she symbolized the normalization of Kiran life. It capped the unification of the Seven Species with a symbolism powerful to all Laminans.

Feslym found fatherhood more consuming than Shepherdship. Klast family loyalties have always been very powerful, so Feslym had difficulty honoring the admonition of Siboot that Shepherds must see above their own species and think only of the Seven Species. Feslym had no problem being fair-minded when it came to resolving the disputes of other Klasts, but when it came to Nafimko and Kendra, Feslym lost his objectivity The Kirans did not resent Feslym this single advantage he took of his office. To himself he took no favors; he readily lent a hand to any physical labor, no matter how difficult or demeaning. They could forgive this minor vanity.

And so Kendra grew up the darling of Kiran society, the Little Princess loved by all. Old mothers made her special clothing: the farmers brought her the first fruits of the season: the machine shop workers made her toys out of unusable scrap. She greeted each gift with a delight that never failed to warm the heart of the donor.

School was Kendra's first harsh encounter with the realities of Kira. Although her teacher treated her with much affection, she was still only one child among many, not the center of attention. Kendra rebelled against the hard truth, and it cost Feslym much pain and many years bringing her to acquiesce to her place as a citizen of Kira. Even then, her acquiescence

was a grudging one; she retained her conviction that she was at heart superior to the other Kiran children.

Her real chance to prove it was with eeyal, and she was undoubtedly blessed with talent She quickly outgrew the children in her age group and was soon challenging the older group. She delighted in using images that the others did not yet understand. Her teacher, sensing the anger with which she used her eeyal, refrained from introducing her to the auras. She of course discovered them on her own and was soon terrorizing her classmates. Once again Feslym had to intervene to correct her behavior, but when Kendra became aware of the power that Feslym commanded, she knew she had found her calling. She struck a deal with Feslym: she would honor his wishes and restrain herself if he would, in turn, teach her about the auras himself. Feslym, unable to refuse his dear daughter, agreed.

Gardbore

Gardbore was the son of Promtilla and Litkin, the archivists for the colony. The job of archivist had become almost hereditary since his grandfather Formote had organized the task in the years after Siboot's death. Somebody had to do something to preserve ail the books, movies, and tapes that had been scattered about in the homes of the colonists. At first it had been primarily a matter of gathering and cataloging everything, but Formote had completed almost all that work His successors were saddled with the task of preserving the meaning of all these works. The archivist position evolved from that of a librarian to a kind of Minister of Culture. In a colony of 250 souls struggling for survival, there was little time for art and no room for artists. The colony's concession to the artistic imperative was to preserve its memory,

Promtilla and Litkin pursued their duties energetically, pushing literature onto tired laborers too polite to refuse it, organizing Sunday afternoon concerts of recorded music that few attended. They never gave up on the attempt to repair the movie-machine; it had been a big draw for the first twenty years after the war Kirans marvelled at the images of life on Lamina, at the lush green foliage that seemed to be everywhere on that blessed planet It was a hopeless effort; the tiny rubber belts had long since decayed and there was simply no substitute on Kira.

The music machines still worked, but nobody cared. The language of music is lost on the unfamiliar ear. The sweet serenades and glorious thundering of classical Laminan composition were random noises to the ears of Khans who had not been brought up in the Laminan tradition of great and powerful music. This was the cruelest sorrow to Promtilla and Litkin, for as Frems they took special pride in this, the one pursuit in which Frems had dominated Laminan culture. Little Gardbore, though, was raised in an environment humming with music. He heard all the great composers. The collection was spotty but they did have most of the important pieces of Laminan music. To his parents' delight, Gardbore developed an avid love of music. They were able to instill in him what they themselves lacked: an inner sense of music.

As he matured, Gardbore faced the dilemma all music-loving Frems struggled with: the desire to play a more direct part in the music. The voiceless Frems had never known song, and so they turned to their instruments and poured their hearts out with strings, winds, and percussions. Gardbore's quandary was even more profound than the one that had driven other Frems in times past to such dizzying heights of composition and instrumentality. There was not a single, functioning musical instrument on all of Kira. His soul soared and danced with music that could find no outlet.

But Gardbore was a Kiran as well as a Frem, and he breathed the sturdy self-reliance that Kira had inculcated in all her children. He found his own way to play his own part in the music. It was a kind of dance. Now, Frems were never dancers. Their stubby limbs and thick bodies made their attempts to follow the music ludicrous. The best dancers on Lamina had always been Ripis, and sometimes Srols. But Gardbore didn't know this, and so he was not deterred. He turned away from his clumsy feet and looked to his elegant hands. Frem hands, so quick and expressive in Frem sign-language, were the ideal outlet for his musical longings.

He would sing with his hands.

It was frustrating at first. All he could seem to do was shake his hands in rough approximation of the beat He felt foolish; his clumsy thrashings bore little resemblance to the beauty of the music he heard. But he kept at it with the same Frem stubbornness and love that had made Frems such great musicians. He learned to see the music as a visual structure. He knew no theory, of course. Perhaps if he had, he might not have invented his unique view of music. He simply traced the visual structure of the music with his hands.

He kept his little art form a secret. There wasn't much point in telling anyone about it– nobody would understand it if he showed it to them. Besides, nobody ever asked him. But he kept practicing and improved steadily. He learned how to make his hands quaver, lilt, and throb. He developed a repertoire of fundamental motions that covered all of the sonic capabilities of Laminan instruments. Staccato stabs for strings, puffs for horns, and precise fingerthrusts for the articulated sounds of the various keyboard instruments. More important, he found the emotional expressiveness he longed for. When the music turned a graceful twist, his hand pirouetted in perfect syntonyA gay dancing trill sent his hand prancing and gambolling through space. When the solo voice of the violin soared in sweet tremolo sadness, his hand accompanied it with soaring, trembling fingers. And when the orchestra thundered back its answer, his hands rippled with power and virility.

He did not thus master his art until he was a young man, working in the fields by day and practicing his passion at night. By this time, he was the Frem acolyte. A multiply-gifted person, Gardbore mastered eeyal with an unconcerned ease that infuriated others in his class. What they struggled with, he didn't care about, yet he learned. Perhaps there is some secret link between musical faculties and eeyal that gave him an advantage.

As he neared middle age, Gardbore took over his parents' job as archivist and continued pursuing his passion. In the early evening hours, he would latch his door, shutter the windows, and lose himself in the angelic strains of the great composers. Their agonies and raptures, their merriments and wonder, their ecstasies all found form in Gardbore's fingers. He came to know these long-dead ancestors of his in his very bones, and feel their voices in his muscles. Gardbore was at one with his heritage.

And nobody ever knew.

Sirk The Til

One of the finest contributions that the Srols made to Laminan culture was the domestication of the Til. These little animals, weighing about 3 kilograms, were hunters in the scrublands of the Srols before they were domesticated, primarily to control the flocks of birds that ate the crops. Smart and sociable, the Tils quickly became house pets in Srol farmhouses. Some of the earliest trading contacts with the Srols involved these endearing creatures, and soon they were being bred all over Lamina. And when the Laminans tint went to Kira, some of them brought along their Tils.

The calamity that befell Lamina and cut off Kira from support forced Siboot to take draconian measures to insure the survival of the colony but Tils were not to be sacrificed for survival. Siboot well knew that his authority would be challenged if he tried to deny the colonists their Tils. And so he devised a formula for the place that Tils would have in Kiran society. Just as the total population of Kira would be held to 250 souls, the Til population would be held to 50 animals. Since the average lifespan of a Til was 10 years, while the average Laminan lived for 50 years, it meant that each and every Kiran would be able to own one Til in his lifetime. Moreover, since the average family had four members, most Kirans could expect to have a Til around most of their lives. It was a wise and generous solution that everybody applauded. The cost in food was about enough to feed two more Kiran mouths, but all agreed that it was a small price to pay for the joy that the Tils brought. Siboot further decreed that no consumable medicines would ever be expended on Tils, a rule that also was widely agreed to.

This basic system governed the Til population on Kira through the years, and served all well. Thus, when a Til named Fester gave birth to a litter of four little Tilkies, they had already been assigned to their new homes. Four weeks later, Skordokott, a six-year old Tayran, brought home his Til, whom he named Sirk

Skordokott and the Tilkie were instant friends. Sirk was an especially smart fellow, and he quickly learned a variety of chase and hide games. He and Skordokott would spend hours stalking each other. Skordokott would creep about, pausing to listen for any sounds of motion, while Sirk would sneak up behind him and attack his leg with mock ferocity. As they grew up, they would go on walks together, with the Til esconced in Skordokott's backpack, taking in all the places they had just been to. Skordokott would talk to Sirk, telling him all his secrets, and Sirk would listen with great attention and no understanding. Skordokott would spend at least an hour each evening playing gently with his little friend.

Skordokott's parents were amazed by his behavior. Not even Tayrans are immune to the charms of the Tils, but such liberal generation of emotional warmth was totally out of character for a Tayran. There was only one other Tayran child at the time, a little girl, and she was so insulted by Skordokott's unseemly coddling of his Til that she stopped playing with him. Skordokott was deeply hurt by her taunts, but didn't change his attitude towards Sirk

His mother wanted to step in and do something about his behavior, but his father demurred. She feared that he was not growing up like a Tayran, that there was something wrong with him to be so quiet and gentle. Little Tayrans, both boys and girls, are always

hellions, but Skordokott seemed to have no interest in running, screaming, and fighting with his playmates.

His father, though, saw a greater wisdom in Skordokott's behavior. "It is true, he is not growing up as a Tayran. He is growing up as a Kiran. Is that not something we ought to aooreciate?" His mother had no answer. Skordokott was allowed to follow his own path with Sirk.

In Skordokott's thirteenth year Sirk met with an accident. He had gone out to wander during the day while Skordokott was at school. but when Skordokott came home that afternoon, Sirk did not show up to greet him. This was a surprise to Skordokott, for Sirk was a punctual creature who would not miss their afternoon greeting. Instantly worried, he began to search for Sirk, but he found nothing and had to be ordered to bed late that night.

The next day was wasted as he fretted through schoolwork, waiting anxiously only to escape and resume his search. At last the time came and Skordokott raced home. As he neared his house, his heart leapt when he saw Sirk's form waiting for him where he always waited. But his joy turned to worried curiousity when he saw Sirk's mouth wide open, the pink tongue sticking out as if he were panting. He reached out to touch Sirk and realized that there was something terribly wrong with the way the mouth hung open. The lower jaw was broken and hung loosely by the gums and tongue-tissue, all of which was swollen badly. Skordokott nearly fainted in horror.

He gently picked up Sirk and carried him to Yelfim's house. Yelfim was the doctor and he would fix Sirk Yelfim took one look at Sirk and sent word for Skordokott's parents to come immediately. He sent another messenger to find Forago to translate. What he had to say was too important to rely on eeyal.

This done, he began a careful examination of the little Til. It took less than two minutes for the frantic parents to show up at the doctor's house, and another minute to calm them down and reassure them that Skordokott was tine. Then, with the parents holding the child's hands, and Forago translating, Yelfim told them his conclusions: "If I could use medicine on this Til, I could probably save him. It would take several operations and much care, but the jawbone could be repaired and the damage healed. But the medicine is far too precious to use on a Til; it is forbidden. Without it, I can do nothing for him."

Skordokott's eyes went wide. "But you're the doctor! You can save him, can't you!"

"I'm sorry, little one. The infection is too deep, the damage too great. I cannot save him:' Skordokott looked in desperation at his mother, then his father. They were both near tears, but their expressions confirmed the doctor's words.

"Isn't there anything we can do?" he begged.

Skordokott's mother knelt in front of him and looked him in the eye with a mixture of sternness and love. 'Yes, Skordokott, there is something we can do, but Sirk is your Til and you must make the decision. We can do nothing and let him die a slow and painful death, or we can put him out of his misery now."

At first Skordokott did not grasp the meaning of her words. You mean we can fix his misery now?" he asked hopefully. His mother hesitated, looked at her husband, and then, very slowly said, 'Yes, Skordokott, we can fix his misery now, the only way that we can. You must take this scalpel and cut the arteries in his neck'

Skordokott's eyes widened in horror at the suggestion. "You want me to KILL Sirk?!?!"

By this time the translation had caught up with Yelfim and he intervened. "This is unnecessary I shall dispose of the animal. You take the poor little fellow home and make up some story to cover his grief Tell him that I am taking the Til to a happy place that only Tils can go. There is no need to torment the child."

"NO!" shouted the mother. Skordokott is a Tayran, and Tayrans are fully responsible for their charges. This Til is Skordokott's charge; Skordokott is the only one to determine his fate."

Yelfim was shocked at the intensity in her voice and stunned by the words when they were translated. He turned to Skordokott's father, who solemnly nodded once. He hesitated, wondering if perhaps he shouldn't bring Feslym into the matter, but then decided to acquiesce. "Very well, he is your son. Here is a scalpel. Make sure that he understands the need for a quick, deep cut."

Skordokott's mother took the scalpel and held it up to her son. You must make and execute the decision, Skordokott. Sirk is your charge, your responsibility What is your decision?"

On that day Skordokott became a Tayran.

Zubi and Locksher

Zubi was a Srol, and her gift for eeyal had singled her out for training as an acolyte at an early age. She raced with ease through the training that all Kiran children receive in eeyal. She caused a minor sensation when, at the age of eight, she innocently engaged in some tanaga-pranks that left the entire community wondering as to their source. Recriminations were starting to fly when the mental vandal was discovered to be a naive child. With relief and laughter, her parents gently reproached her in the responsibilities of mind-power, and she never repeated the behavior.

Norgentan, the current Srol acolyte, knew from that day that in Zubi resided the mental power to assure her the Shepherdship if ever she were given the opportunity. He took her under his wing and secretly provided her with additional training When she came of age, Norgentan had her assigned to the position of pumphouse technician. In that remote facility she would be isolated from other Srols, for Norgentan, in the manner that is usual with overzealous teachers, did not wish her attentions distracted. The passion and energy that drives all Srols would be focussed exclusively on the development of her auras.

The current pumphouse technician was Locksher, a Lokweel a few years older than Zubi. Locksher was also an acolyte-in-training it seems that Norgentan's desire to isolate his trainees was shared by the Lokweel acolyte. Most Khans held pumphouse duty to be a form of punishment, a period of exile from the community to be endured, not enjoyed. Locksher was therefore elated to learn that a replacement had been selected. It would take a week to train Zubi and then he would return to civilization.

The aging equipment at the pumphouse foiled the plans of Norgentan and Locksher Within a few days of Zubi's arrival, a check valve, encrusted with mineral deposits, refused to snap shut under back pressure, and the pressure tank bled out through it. This was not a new emergency; the supply of water had always been vital to the survival of the Khan colony, and previous generations had mastered the art of repairing the old plumbing. Nevertheless, it was an emergency, and it demanded immediate rectification. They first notified the colony of a water emergency, initiating a water-preserving routine by all colonists. Then they routed the water supply through the small backup tank that could satisfy the reduced demand of the colony. Next they depressurized the main tank and removed the check valve. They scrubbed the valve out with a wire brush, ground the valve seat smooth, and reassembled everything. Zubi failed to tighten the cutoff valve properly, and when they repressurized the system and Locksher opened the valve, it blew clean out of the housing and sailed 30 meters up into the air. Locksher was lucky to be uninjured, but he stood over the valve trying to hold the water in with his hands, an attempt made ridiculous by the 150 pounds of pressure in the water and made necessary by the preciousness of water. He screamed at the top of his lungs, "Cut the pump! Cut the pump!" but Zuhi, from the other side of the housing, could hear only the rush of the water. She turned the corner to behold Locksher the centerpiece of a mighty fountain, the sprays of water reaching out at angles dictated by the spaces between his fingers. At this moment of crisis, Zubi was overwhelmed by laughter at the sight, and fell to the sand, to roll

there despite Locksher's furious shouts. After some seconds she found her feet and staggered, still convulsed with laughter, to the main power box. She threw the switch and the geyser around Locksher receded. He unbent himself, examining his tingling hands for damage, but there was none. He walked slowly to Zubi, who now kneeled at the power box, still giggling. She fell silent on his approach. When he reached her, he paused, struggling for words. She looked up at him and inquired with all innocence, Master enjoy ***shower?***

Now, Locksher was a particularly good-hearted fellow, but this was too much. He stared down at her for a few seconds, struggling with his fury, then slowly turned around and walked away.

Zubi chased after him. *I'm **sorry.** I'm sorry. Please. No Locksher angry.*

He stopped and looked at her bright face, now lined with concern at the wrong she had done. He paused again. ***Locksher*** no angry. ***Locksher...*** ***Locksher....*** He couldn't find the words to say how he felt. That was a rotten trick, to laugh at him like that, but he knew she meant no harm. She was so full of energy, he couldn't feel anger at her mirth, even if it was at his expense. ***Locksher...*** ***Locksher...*** wet. He sent it with great intensity of feeling and all seriousness. She stared at him unbelieving for a second, then fell down on the sand again, laughing. He watched her, earnestly taking pride in his unintended joke.

They had no time to revel, though; the water system remained out of operation. Zubi found the valve head and Locksher repaired the valve. Four more hours and they had the thing running. An hour later they rescinded the water emergency,

The next week went smoothly. They monitored the performance of all the components of the water system, trying to isolate problems before they became failures. They checked the depth of the water in the well every day Locksher showed Zubi how to estimate the undisturbed groundwater level by measuring the rate of recovery of the well after a large amount of water had been taken out. Despite the fact that the installation wasn't very big, the age and importance of the equipment justified constant checking of all the parameters of its performance.

Zubi had settled into the routine of pumphouse life. She slept in her bedroll under the kitchen table. Locksher, as host, made all the meals and Zubi, as guest, did all the cleaning There wasn't much opportunity to talk; neither understood the other's language, but they did talk in eeyal as much as possible. As acolytes-in-training thev were expected to continue refining their skills in eeyal, and each found it rewarding to converse with an accomplished speaker of that difficult language. Unfortunately the conversation tended to drift in directions that suited the constraints of eeyal rather than the interests of the two speakers, but it was fun nonetheless to chat about the little things of life. Most conversations in eeyal with normal people were so blandly functional, short exchanges punctuated by frantic gestures and occasional scribbled diagrams in the sand. It was exciting to carry on real conversations with a member of another species, even if they were hobbled conversations. And so they chatted about mundane things, trying to insert meaning into the primitive sentences of the language, stretching their skills and the language.

Towards the end of the week, as Locksher was preparing to turn the job over to Zubi, a new problem arose: the pressurizing pump showed a loss of pressure. Locksher knew that he couldn't turn over the job to a neophyte with so serious a problem. He called Feslym and

informed him of the problem and his intention to remain at the pumphouse for the next week or two to handle the repairs.

Zubi and Locksher plotted their strategy together. The repair of the main pressurizing pump was an intricate operation. While it was shut down, there would only be the small secondary pressurizing pump to supply the entire community. The water-wise Kirans could easily handle a short-term water emergency, but the crops would not be so tolerant If they disassembled the main pump and found serious problems resistant to immediate solution, it could create a disaster for the community. It was an immense responsibility for two young people to bear, but they were acolytes, the best of their generation, and Khans were trained from childhood to take responsibility.

Carefully, they analyzed the data and considered the possibilities: worn impellors, scale inside the housing, clogged valves, even low voltage to the motor They ran tests developed generations earlier to get a clearer indication of conditions inside the pump. They ruled out some possibilities. They argued their interpretations of the results. Locksher had experience and maturity Zubi had energy, intuition, and powerful analytic skills. Together they created a checklist of possibilities and their responses should they arise. They had the machine shop build a new impellor blade as a hedge against the possibility of the existing one being damaged. They rehearsed the sequence of steps they would take, challenging each other at each point They advised the agricultural director to irrigate more heavily in the days before they shut down the pump, just in case they failed.

When they were ready, they began the operation. The tools were all in position, the plans and diagrams were all taped to the walls above the workplaces. They shut down the pump and removed it in an hour and 23 minutes. Then came the slow, tricky task of disassembling a pump that had been in continuous use for 133 years. The screws had been used hundreds of times, but with such care that they showed little wear. Much effort was required to separate the old parts. Each part was carefully cleaned as it came off the pump.

The problem was a bent impellor blade. They both studied it carefully, trying to guess the cause of the bend, but there were no score marks inside the housing to suggest that a rock had entered the pump. The filter was undamaged. They made careful notes of the condition of the pump's interior for the log book, and then reassembled it It was a slow, careful reassembly. They stole a few hours' sleep the first night and resumed work at 4:00 AM the next morning. They continued with the reassembly until late that second evening, and just before midnight they called in the recision of the water emergency They were exhausted but too elated to go to sleep. They sat down at the kitchen table to celebrate.

Locksher praise Zubi. Zubi work well.

Locksher show Zubi the way. Zubi ***thank Locksher.***

They sat at the table, sipping their drinks and expressing their admiration for each other, until they exhausted the clumsy limits of eeyal. Then they sat silently, slouched in their chairs, fondling their cups, staring at each other. Locksher again felt the frustration of not being able to express himself in eeyal. The language was still so primitive. In the last two weeks, he had developed feelings for Zubi that he could not express. She was so bright and lively, so full of energy and joy, brimming over with fun and happiness. He wondered, why would they banish such a beautiful woman to this place? Normally pumphouse duty was reserved for antisocial

clods like himself, but Zubi was the antithesis of that It seemed a violation of fairness and decency to send a person who radiates such joy into the loneliness of the pumphouse. He, he was a loner to start with; he could take the loneliness better than most. But it was a crime to send Zubi here. He felt sadness for her, and anger at the injustice of her assignment. How could he express all that to her?

He looked straight into her eyes, and she returned the gaze. He struggled with his eeyal, trying to form the images. ***Lo&her... Locksher.*** The intensity of his feelings seemed to block his efforts. ***Locksher...*** He reached deep inside himself, still staring straight into her eyes, and then he found it, the image he wanted; it was a new image, one that nobody had ever used before: ***Locksher*** love *Zubi.* She understood it instantly, and found the same image within herself ***Zubi*** love ***Locksher*** The message came back with immediate and compelling honesty.

They both sat back in their chairs, stunned. Zubi wondered to herself, What is this? How can I love a Lokweel? We are different, Locksher and I. We cannot even talk, except through eeyal. We Khans are all supposed to love each other, Siboot taught us that, but this, this is different. I have never felt so strong a love before, not even for another Srol. She looked at him, recalling the camraderie and closeness of the last two weeks, and she realized that she loved him because he was good-hearted, honest, and gentle to her. As an acolyte-in-training she had more in common with him than with any other Srol on Kira. He knew the mental strain, the responsibility, the frightening nights of auradreams that hurl you awake sweating and shivering On her second night at the pumphouse she had experienced a bad one and woke up screaming; in her still-elevated aura-state she had felt his aura soothe and comfort her. Why then couldn't she love him?

But where could it lead? Where was the boundary between love and passion, and how could she stay on the near side of that border? The love she felt was too strong to be repressed, yet too alien to be expressed. Would she take him in her arms and-no, the very thought of it was repugnant It would always be love under a low ceiling, always constrained by the physical realities of their bodies.

Many of the ***same*** thoughts were going through Locksher's mind. Even a fourth-generation Kiran could not escape the deep-seated feelings of antipathy that the Seven Species held for each other. Every time he felt his love, he could also hear a voice saying, "But, she's a Srol." Confused and frightened, Locksher stretched out his hand to touch Zubi. She too reached out, but when their hands touched, they both recoiled in horror and revulsion at the sensation of touching alien skin while such thoughts filled their minds. Locksher stood up, alarmed and frightened. Zubi stood, too, then backed out of the room, away from Locksher. She reached the door, turned, and fled.

She did not return that night, nor the next morning. Locksher packed up his things and prepared to return to the colony. His work at the pumphouse was done; it was time to go back He waited by the door of the pumphouse. Eventually Zubi appeared on the crest of the rise and stood watching him. He slung his bag over his back and started walking down the ancient path leading back to the colony He paused at the curve and looked back Zubi had walked down from the rise to the pumphouse and was standing by the doorway. He raised his hand in salute and goodbye.. She raised hers. They stood that way for perhaps a minute. Then he dropped his arm and trudged back to the colony.

Wiki and Skordokott

"Wiki, what do you think you're doing?"

Wiki woke up from his daydream and looked at Mortil. For a second his face showed some panic, but that was quickly replaced by a more relaxed expression. "I'm Sorry, sir. I was just thinking:'

"Ah, Wiki, you are such a sadness to me. Blessed with so much talent, and yet so unconcerned. You are the finest Ripi speaker of eeyal. sure to become the next Ripi acolyte when Jukili retires, yet you don't seem to care for the responsibility? .

"I'm sorry, Mortil. I know you're right, but I just can't seem to care very much for it I didn't choose this great honor for myself, and I wish that I could transfer the burden to someone more desirous of it Besides:' he broke into a grin, "I'm young; I have so little time and so much hell to raise."

Mortil laughed. It was hard to remain angry with Wiki's light heart and sense of fun. "Co home, Wiki. Try to practice the constructions I showed you today.'

"I will, sir." Wiki winked wickedly,

He went straight from Mortil's house to the cafeteria. At this hour, late afternoon, there would be only a few snacks set out, but there would probably be some of the other young people. Kiran society recognized the greater need of young people for socializing and required of them only a partial workshift in their late adolescence. Most of them would be gathering at the cafeteria for a snack and some fun.

Jopin was already there. A fat little Frem, she helped out in the records office and so had a shorter distance to walk to reach the cafeteria when the *3:00* horn blew. *Hello, Wiki! What's up?* Despite her clumsiness with eeyal, her bounciness and laughter came right through with the images. Wiki laughed to himself. You can never lie in eeyal. *Jopin! Dream-girl!* He expanded the point with anexaggerated gesture of himself sweeping an imaginary Ripi girl off her feet and smothering her with kisses. Jopin laughed and blushed, rejecting his action with a dismissive wave of her hand.

Wastrel! The image shot through both their minds with frighteningly great penetration power, causing them both to instantly drop their play and wheel about, searching for the source of the accusation. Wiki knew from the texture and feel of the image, and sure enough, there in the doorway stood Skordokott, tall and powerful in the bloom of early Tayran manhood, still sweating from his work guiding an irrigator.

Skordokott eeyal is *good.* Wiki had no desire to argue with Skordokott. Perhaps Skordokott was just in a bad mood.

Wiki eeyal is less than Wiki talents. Wiki wastes time on child-play. Wiki is a disgrace. Skordokott work to learn eeyal and Wikiplay. Wiki is bad acolyte.

Wiki is not acolyte. Wiki is only student.

Skordokott was not placated by Wiki's excuses. He grew angrier at this lazy, laughing fool. *Wiki betray Ripis. Skordokott work hard. Skordokott become Shepherd*

Feslym not dead.

Skordokott grow stronger. Feslym will die. Then Skordokott become Shepherd. Wikt never be Shepherd. Wiki lazy.

By this time a number of other people had entered the cafeteria. Few could fully understand the conversation, but all knew that it was a serious confrontation. Wiki was uncomfortable with the unpleasantness of it. He didn't like to fight He paused and then smiled at Skordokott Then he just walked out

Jopin chased after him. ***Wiki run away? Wiki should tight.***

Wiki no fight. Wiki has idea.

Mealtime in the cafeteria was always an intimidating experience. Old Tekula the Lokweel ran the place with a hard eye and a sharp tongue, and although few could understand her, all feared her anger. She ran a tight ship, making sure that everybody cleaned their plate, bussed their tray, and observed her idea of decorum. Skordokott, like other Tayrans, had little objection to her dictatorial style; the cafeteria was, in his mind, Tekula's territory, and she had a right to run it any way she saw fit He waited his turn and when it came, pointed to some leafy vegetables and started to signal, I ***want.*** But something odd happened just as he did. Just before he began to signal, another set of images came in. Now, one of the first lessons in eeyal that every Kiran child learns is to "get off the air" if somebody else is signalling, and so Skordokott instinctively killed his message before it got started.

The message seemed to make no sense; somebody had signalled, ***That garbage.*** Skordokott stood, still pointing at the food, waiting for the message to clear Then he went ahead with his own signal, I ***want.*** He was surprised to see Tekula staring at him coldly. He blinked innocently, wondering if something was wrong. Several people nearby edged away from him. He looked around, his confusion growing. ***What is wrong?*** he asked Tekula. She wiped her hands on her apron and disappeared into the kitchen, to emerge a few seconds later with a pail. ***Skordokott want garbage. Here garbage.*** She dumped the contents of the pail onto his head.

It was then that Skordokott realized that the first set of images felt surprisingly like his own tone of expression.

Vetvel at Work

You've been meditating for the last hour, beefing up your mental strength, but it doesn't seem to be working for you today Oh, well, some days you have it and some days you don't. You might as well check out the pantry and grab something to eat before heading out to work

The pantry is not well-stocked. This is as it should be. From the very beginnings of the colony, before Siboot himself, it was established that most of the food should be dispensed through the cafeteria. It is just too wasteful to support food-preparation and storage facilities in each home. Simple, non-perishable foods that required little in the way of preparation are allowed, but otherwise the colonists are required to eat at the cafeteria. Even so, many colonists occasionally sacrifice the culinary "delights" of the cafeteria for the pleasures of a private, if simple, meal. This morning you are in such a mood. and so some cold porridge serves for breakfast.

The sun is climbing high, and it's time you got yourself off to the fields. You are one of six translators on Kira; you, like everybody else, work an eight-hour shift. This means that at any given time there are two translators on duty The translators are expected to hang out at the field or the machine shop, two busy places where there is often a need for the precise kind of communication that eeyal cannot yet provide. Being an acolyte, you pulled the easier job of field duty Although there are over a hundred people working in the fields, most of the work is straightforward, and the demand for your services is less than it would be at the machine shop. You spend most of your workdays lounging around in the equipment shed, staying out of the sun and practicing your eeyal whenever possible. Occasionally somebody calls you over to help translate a conversation, and sometimes you are called hack to the village to assist with some special need. For the most part, though, yours is an easy job.

You've earned it, of course. Learning the seven languages of Kira is a tough challenge, and you busted your butt as a kid doing it. Your parents had pressured you into it, not wanting you to spend your life as a field hand, and you are grateful now that they were so determined. What neither you nor they had anticipated was that you would also demonstrate such talent in eeyal. Perhaps it was all the training in the other languages, but halfway through school you began to show high proficiency for eeyal. A few years later, Menkili selected you as the new Jomkar acolyte when she retired. Your diligence earned you the translator job, but becoming the Jomkar acolyte-that was fortune.

You check in with Skordokott. He's one of the field crew chiefs, and he is not popular with his workers, although he is respected. He's smart, tough, and demanding. His crew consistently outperforms the other field crews, and they take some pride in that, but Skordokott is not sensitive enough to use their pride to keep their morale up. He just drives them hard. They would have rebelled long ago except for the fact that Skordokott works harder and longer than any of them.

Skordokott and you are good friends. It would be different if you had to work for him, but that would never happen anyway; acolytes are never placed in subordinate positions. Skordokott treats you with the respect you deserve as an acolyte, and genuine friendliness

to boot: you are one of the few people he deals with who does not regard him with sullen resentment.

Locksher's crew is coming off its shift as you arrive. They are all dusty and tired, but Locksher himself never droops. His confident, alert style of giving orders and taking care of his crew provides quite a contrast with Skordokott's brusque technique. Locksher's people all have absolute faith in him. They carry out his orders smoothly, even though they are eager to get home. One of the workers, a younger kid, is having problems stacking some equipment properly. Locksher moves in on him and takes over the task, drawing attention away from his act by loudly instructing somebody else on the other side of the equipment shed. The kid watches and learns the proper way to stack the stuff without undergoing any humiliation,

On his way out, Locksher stops to have a brief word of greeting with you. He seems to be a thoroughly likable guy, and there is nothing unpleasant about his demeanor toward you, but you have never really felt comfortable with him. He's a little too smooth, a little too take-charge, a little too "together" for your liking He would make a perfect Shepherd, if only the Shepherdship were awarded for managerial talents. You make small talk with him pleasantly enough, and he goes his way

The day passes quietly enough. You help straighten out some confusion about the course and depth of a small irrigation pipe; you join in some breaktime chatter between the workers. It is always surprising to see how much meaning these people can squeeze out of simple eeyal supplemented with grand gestures. Some of these people are very good mimes! They tell stories, argue, and gossip with the language. You help out where you can, but the literal translations are often less than the imagination provides.

The only excitement of the day comes when you are asked to translate at an altercation at the school. By the time you arrive, Feslym and a dozen other people are there, all jabbering at each other in their native languages and fractured eeyal. Feslym shuts everybody up and you proceed to interview each of the participants in turn, translating into only Feslym's native Klast language. It seems that one of the children, a Lokweel, has been terrorizing the others, and the teacher has finally called in the parents to demand that they discipline the child. The parents, though, reject the charges levelled at their child and accuse the teacher of personal prejudice against him. There are ugly undertones of species-prejudice in their wordings. Some of the other parents are present, and you do not wish them to understand the precise meaning of the accusations. You pull Feslym aside and advise him of the situation. Feslym has a few questions for the teacher, the young troublemaker, and his parents. Then he directs the teacher and you into the outer entryway. Through you, he informs the teacher that her handling of the situation has been proper, but special tact will be required to defuse a delicate situation. She is to spend additional time with the child, provide him with extra attention and some special favors, but she is also to be absolutely unyielding in her disciplinary demands. If he does not reform in two months, he will be removed from school and sent to the fields. The severity of Feslym's pronouncement shocks the teacher.

The parents are next, and Feslym's approach with them is diplomatic but much stronger. They have been remiss in their duties, he tells them, and he is especially upset with their intimations of species-prejudice. He is shocked that any Kiran would be party to such evil thoughts in the absence of proof. As a consideration to their sensibilities, he will interview the

parents of other Lokweel children to verify their suspicions, and if there appears to be substance to them, he will take action. Until then, they are to banish such evil thoughts from their minds and accept the fact that some blame does indeed fall upon their child. He concludes by warning them that the child will be removed from school and sent to work in the fields if the situation is not quickly remedied. They are shocked and hurt, and promise to take strong disciplinary measures.

You accompany Feslymback to the main building. "Why did you impose so harsh a threat on the parents?" you ask "I am the Shepherd:' he replies, "it is not my task to find pleasant solutions or to hwe people like me. I must do what is best for the Seven Species. The issue at the school had nothing to do with the child. The issue was species-prejudice. Would the Lokweel parents accept the judgment of a Ripi teacher? If they had presented their complaint as little more than a dispute between overprotective parents and teacher, then I would have taken a completely different approach. But once they showed the slightest inkling of species-prejudice, I had to respond to that above all other matters."

"But is it right to harm the child's future in pursuit of the parents'sins?"

"If Kira cannot resolve the problem of the Seven Species, what future does any child have?"

He takes his leave of you. You notice how tired he looks, how his shoulders droop and his voice no longer carries the characteristic lilt of the Klast language. He is not that old, you think; his daughter Kendra has just now come of age, and already he looks like the Ages. Is this what all that eeyal, all those auras do to one? Or is it the consequence of making brutal decisions all day long, decisions that hurt people individually to help them collectively? You stare at his receding form and wonder, would I really want to be Shepherd even if I could?

It doesn't matter what I want, you muse. There are millions of Jomkars back on Lamina who want a Jomkar Shepherd, and you are honor-bound to give it your best shot You can't even resign unless there is somebody better than you to take your place. That's just the way it is.

It's been a long day. You go home to more cold porridge and quiet thought

Illness

You knock at the door, but it is ajar and you know that you should simply enter without bothering Nafimko. You quietly slide the door open and slip inside. The outer room is empty, but you have hardly taken two steps before you encounter Gardbore coming out of the bedroom.

"How is he?" you ask

"It looks bad. The doctor seems quite helpless. The infection has moved into his lungs and he is having problems breathing. The old man doesn't seem to have much fight left in him."

You purse your lips and shake your head. This is bad news. You share your thoughts with Gardbore:

"It looks as if we shall be initiating the campaign soon. I do not relish the thought'

He looks at YOU nonchalantlv. You and Gardbore were never good friends. You find him aloof and haughty;he never seemed to share his thoughts with you. Perhaps he never trusted you. He seems to look down his nose at you and almost sniff dismissively. His only comment is, "It is what we have been training for all these years." Then he is gone.

You gather your courage and enter the bedroom. Nafimko and the doctor are standing by the bed, motionless. Feslym lies there. With some effort, he glances up; a weak smile arises on the old lips.

"Ah, Vetvel! So good of you to come! It is so taxing using eeyal, and translation is always so slow and"-he casts a reassuring glance at Ganigil-"indirect It is good to be able to talk to you directly in Klast So tell me, are you preparing yourself for the campaign?"

"Feslym, it is unseemly for us to discuss the campaign. I am hoping very much that you will beat this illness."

"Oh, pish-posh! Everybody knows that I am going to die; it's just a matter of how soon. You should be preparing yourself for what happens after that. Oh, how I wish I could be around to see how it goes!" A pause. "Do you suppose that I could announce my death in advance so that I could watch the campaign?"

"Don't be morbid, Feslym. Remember, the campaign cannot start until after the funeral. Do you want to watch your funeral, too?"

"That would be a good one, yes that would. I could even give the eulogy!" He chuckles to himself, then begins coughing violently. The doctor bends over him, trying to help him, while Nafimko casts you an evil eye. It takes several minutes to calm the coughs, and Nafimko is insisting that you leave, but Feslym insists on a last word.

"Vetvel, you know that I cannot and would not favor any candidate in the campaign. But I want to emphasize this to you: I want you to tight hard and well to win. I remember how much agony it was to carry on the mental combat, and I am sure that it will be worse this time, what with the greater amounts of aura you young ones carry about"

He pauses to steady his breathing.

"Under no circumstances are you to drop out of the competition. The credibility of the Shepherdship is at stake; if any acolyte drops out, the stature and legitimacy of the Shepherdship will be discredited in the eyes of many Laminans. And one other thing."

He pauses again, coughing weakly.

"Whomever wins, you must support. I want your promise that the winner of the competition will have your full, vocal support That you will go on the radio to Lamina and tell all the Jomkars, if you lose, that the new Shepherd is the rightful and proper Shepherd who deserves their absolute support."

He coughs again. . .

"Promise!" It is a hoarse wheeze. What can you say? How can you hesitate to satisfy a deathbed request from the Shepherd? You promise, fervently, that you will honor the spirit and letter of his request

His last words to you are, "Good, the others have also promised." Then he lies back to rest You leave before Nafimko can throw you out

This time you are the exiting party and Kendra is entering. You feel sympathy for Kendra. What she must be going through! All the other acolytes are under enough pressure as it is, gearing themselves up for the campaign, but Kendra must also cope with the impending death of her father. She was always very close to her father; this must be tearing her apart You've always felt some affinity for Kendra, even though her snooty ways kept a wall between the two of you. You pause in front of her to ask, "How are you doing? Is there anything I can do?"

She looks at you and, for just an instant, she seems about to tell you how terrible she feels, how the pressure is more than she can take, how she just wants to cry, but then something comes over her and she braces herself, saying, "It is a difficult time, yes. I think I can handle it. Thank you, Vetvel."

She heads into the bedroom and you leave the house. There is already a knot of people waiting outside. The deathwatch has begun. You go home: there is nothing to do now but meditate in preparation for the campaign. You will be summoned when the time comes.

The Judge of the Campaign

You decide to drop by the cafeteria to grab a quick meal before heading home to contemplate the coming campaign. Waiting for you at the door of the cafeteria is Flanl the teacher, By tradition, the most senior teacher on Kira is the Judge of the Campaign, a sort of referee whose job it is to insure that the campaign is carried out fairly and with decorum. The Judge also acts as an interim Shepherd, although he or she is expected to pass all important decisions on to the new and rightfully chosen Shepherd.

Flanl is a quiet person, prim and proper, and a bit of a pedant, always testing the acolytes with fine points of eeyal. It seems the universal goal ofacademics is to impose upon their subjects, no matter how simple, an imposing array of roles and structures utterly devoid of significance. So it is with Flanl and eeyal. Here is a clean and simple language that has slowly evolved through the trials and errors of its many speakers. There is little grammar to speak of; the structure of the language arises quite naturally from its use. This lack of grammar, a relief to students, was a challenge to Flanl, and she set to work imposing a grammar on eeyal. After some years of effort she devised a truly awesome system that made no sense whatever. Surely it would have won her some sort of academic prize, had there been academic societies on Kira to award it. As it was, her work was neglected by the ignorant boors who would rather use eeyal than understand its inner structure.

This did not discourage Flanl. There were always the acolytes, supposedly the keepers of the flame of eeyal, the finest speakers of eeyal, and as a teacher she had quite some influence over who would be selected to become an acolyte. Thus, it was that a generation of acolytes learned the Grammar of eeyal according to Flanl, memorizing a huge list of rules and their inevitable exceptions. The tortures did not end with one's accession to acolyte status; no, Flanl prowls the streets and public places looking for acolytes, and when she catches one, she requires her victim to pass her impromptu grammar test.

So here she stands in front of you, and you brace yourself for another test, quickly recalling some of the obscure points of her grammar, You are lucky today; the question she asks is easy, and she lets you go with a short five-minute lecture on how to decline irregular verbs in eeyal, if there were any irregular verbs or declinations in eeyal.

Zubi is sitting at a nearby table, smirking. You stop to ask what she rinds so funny.

"You certainly got off the hook easily that time. You never could handle irregular verbs. I would have loved to see her nail you with one of her questions about inverse conjugations. You would have squirmed and beat around the bush just as you used to do as a kid. Brings back fond memories, doesn't it?"

"Come off it, Zubi," you say with some irritation. "You talk as if that stupid grammar really meant something. You may be great at memorizing trivial nonsense, but your aura-powers are not enough to make me overly-concerned about you as a potential rival during the campaign:'

She looks at you coldly. "We shall see soon enough, Vetvel."

You head over to the serving tables and assemble your meal. Then you start looking for a seat at a quiet table. Along the way, though, you hear your name being called. It's Wiki! You grin and thread your way through the chairs and sitting-stands to his table.

“Howya doing there, champ!” he asks.

“Just OK, Wiki. Old Flanl caught me at the door and grilled me. I got through OK:

‘Yeah, she’s set up an acolyte-trap there. She’s smart-figures that we’ll all come to dinner tonight to get a good meal before we start preparations for the campaign. So far she’s caught everyone except Skordokott and Kendra.”

“Actually, the worst part of it was Zubi standing two meters away snickering, She thinks she’s so smart because she memorizes all that tripe,”

"Aw, Zubi’s a nice kid. You can’t trust her, and she’s got a mean streak, but I do like her. She can be real nice if you get on her good side.”

‘Yeah, well, maybe she’s nice to you, but she treats me like dirt.”

“Hey, look, I gotta go now. Have to go visit old Mom before I go into hibernation for the night. You take care, kiddo, and don’t let any ferocious grammarians catch you:’

“Right, Wiki."

“One other thing: good luck in the campaign.”

You look up at him. His normal jaunty expression is gone; for once, Wiki is not making a joke. You smile back at him and put your hand on his little shoulder. “Good luck to you, Wiki."

Eyes

Eyes. Eight pairs of eyes. Seven focussed down at the prone form on the bed. One looking up, focused on nothing. No sound save that of slow, labored breathing. The lips strain to form a word, but no word emerges. Seven pairs of eyes strain to divine the nascent word on those lips, but none is there. The lone pair of eyes moves over each of the seven pairs, searching. The eyelids lower. the mist over the once-bright eves thickens. The breathing falters. The eyelid; fall shut

You stand in shocked silence for perhaps a minute. Then your duty prods you out of your stupor. You edge open the door behind you a crack, and a figure appears in the gap. “Tell them: you say softly, “it is over."

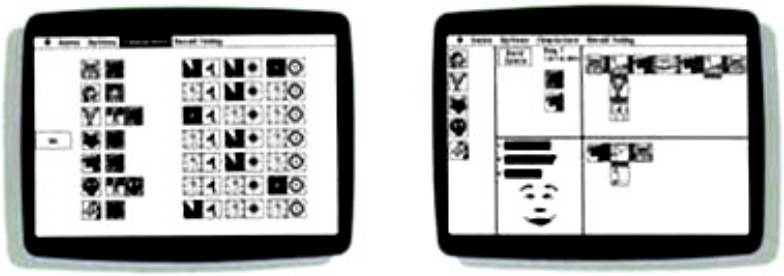
You cover your eyes as you let the door close. It is over. Feslym is dead. The Shepherd of Kira is gone. All these years he gave us hope. And now it is over.

A wail erupts in the outer chamber, a wail that is taken up by waiting voices in the yard. Within seconds, that wail will echo through space to the home planet of Lamina, where billions will pause in their labors and contemplate their loss. The seven discordant species of Lamina will find brief unity in their sadness. After that, the fragile union of Lamina will again be put to the test.

Even as one era has ended, another has begun. As you look up from your contemplative floorward stare, you can see the six pairs of eyes looking at each other, sizing each other up. Eyes dart from face to face, sending subtle messages of threat and support, of demand and reply. Already tbe scramble is on; tonight the combat will begin One of these seven acolytes -only one-will be chosen to replace Feslym as the Shepherd of Kira, the fourth successor of Siboot the Founding Shepherd. Each candidate from a different species, each one desperate to earn that place for his species. Who will win that position?

Trust & Betrayal

The Legacy of Siboot



by Chris Crawford

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